

IRISH WRITING

THE MAGAZINE OF
CONTEMPORARY IRISH LITERATURE



Edited by
DAVID MARCUS
and
TERENCE SMITH

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
CECIL FRENCH SALKELD	
THE GIRLS AT THE SPHINX	7
JAMES T. FARRELL	
SHE WENT BY GENTLY	11
PAUL VINCENT CARROLL	
EXTRACT FROM WATT	16
SAMUEL BECKETT	
A MOUNTAIN BIRD	25
JAMES HANLEY	
THE CALL TO ARMS	29
DENIS JOHNSTON	
A MAN HAS SOMETHING TO LOSE	35
PATRICK BRADY	
ADAM AND EVE (<i>Poem</i>)	43
OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY	
FINLEY PETER DUNNE AND MR. DOOLEY	
FRANCIS RUSSELL	47
RE-READING 'THE CROCK OF GOLD'	
GEORGE EGON HATVARY	57
A SCOTS NOTE TO 'RAGGLE TAGGLE'	
WALTER STARKIE	66
BOOK REVIEWS	
MAURICE KENNEDY	
BLANAID SALKELD	
TERESA DEEVY	71
P. J. MADDEN	74

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INTRODUCTION

An Tóstal 1953 has been the occasion of initiating a great many new features throughout Ireland. It has also, I am glad to say, been the occasion of reviving and strengthening other features which have existed before in Irish cultural life, but which perhaps needed just this extra stimulus to become something outstanding.

In the main I refer to fluctuating items such as local Drama Festivals, sporadic Art Exhibitions and other truly praiseworthy efforts of this kind.

No such description can be applied to "Irish Writing" which has been steadily going its way through the years without, as far as I know, any major interruption in its steadfast devotion to the cause of Irish Letters.

I have not seen this issue, which I am told intends reflecting An Tóstal's spirit of Ireland at Home to its friends and exiles by bringing together famous Irish writers who are living abroad, but I do know that when occasionally a copy of this magazine comes my way, and when I have a moment to take it up and read it, I have never failed to be impressed by the high quality of the writing and by the spirit of integrity that has animated its editorial policy.

May I wish this special An Tóstal issue every success, and that this success may attend the future of "Irish Writing."

CECIL FFRENCH SALKELD, A.R.H.A.,
Executive Officer in charge of
Cultural Features—An Tóstal.



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JAMES T. FARRELL

THE GIRLS AT THE SPHINX

I HAD HAD DINNER WITH SOREL. ALTHOUGH I WAS VERY POOR, Sorel usually managed to borrow money from me, and it was difficult to get him to repay these loans. But on this night he was in an expansive and Christian mood. He had taken me to dinner in a restaurant on the Boulevard Montparnasse, and he'd tried to cheer me up. Our newborn baby had died, and my wife was still in the hospital. It was close to Christmas, and the shock of the baby's death had left me in a state of depression.

My thoughts went back to Chicago. I recalled past Christmas times, but I dwelt on dissatisfactions and disappointments rather than joyful memories. And my own circumstances were very precarious. Our money was running out. It was impossible to get work in Paris, or even to get a *carte de travail* that would give me the legal right to find work. What would the future hold for me? How would we get along? When she came out of the hospital, my wife would be in a weakened condition. How could she be built up and regain her strength? Where would we get the money so that we could go on? How could I continue with my writing? Could I remain hopeful, as I had these last seven months in Paris? Now I was alone and struggling to restore that sense of hope.

But Sorel was not the person to cheer up anyone. He deeply resented the world and was intensely absorbed in himself. He was a gifted and well-educated Frenchman of my own age—I was then twenty-seven. His hatreds were deeply fixed in his character, and he lacked any sense of responsibility. Though I often disagreed with him, I was taken by his brilliance, for at that time I was somewhat naïve. At times I would try to disagree with him, to state attitudes counter to his, and to point out what I considered the unreasonableness of his views and declamations. My naïveté consisted of my speaking and acting on the assumption that everyone—including Sorel—was concerned with trying to discover the truth and trying to reason logically. But Sorel had the saving grace of wit, a wit that was bound up with his own feeling of pity for himself and with the pathos that marked all his thinking.

It had been a good dinner. The restaurant was small, and the customers and waiters had been friendly. The place had been almost filled, and I had been the only American eating there. All around me there had been unknown Frenchmen, talking and enjoying their food. Sorel had talked steadily, and he had been in good form. Not one known figure in contemporary French literature had escaped his scorn or condemnation. He had imitated and parodied his employers, the Dubuisson brothers, who were

famous publishers, and this had been very entertaining. He had regaled me with anecdotes about what went on in the Dubuissou offices, and these were most amusing. I should add, however, that Sorel made himself the center of every story, and he would usually conclude his anecdotes by quoting one of his *bon mots*, which he properly appreciated. Also, his conversation was sprinkled with ugly descriptions of the physical and moral traits of the men he talked about. They were all pigs and dogs and lice. And he lamented the state of France and of the world. His was not particularly cheerful conversation, nor was it stimulating.

After eating, he remarked that he could not stand the sight of crowds of people, of human *merde*, and he said he would take me to a quiet place, instead of to a café like the Select or the Dôme, where I often went in the evening.

He took me to the Sphinx, on the Boulevard Edgar-Quinet, and as we were walking there, he remarked that it was a famous brothel, but that it would be quiet and we could sit there and have a drink. I became excited. I even thought that a girl might make me forget, and that I had a need to forget. But Sorel and I both agreed we didn't want to go with any of the girls, that we wanted only a quiet place in which we could sit and talk.

The inside looked like a café. It was dimly lit. A fat, middle-aged woman in a dark evening dress greeted us, and Sorel spoke French with her, telling her that we merely wanted a drink. We took seats along a wall in a corner, and immediately four girls crowded around us. Sorel ordered an *apéritif*, and I ordered a beer. He also ordered drinks for the girls.

They were buxom, country girls. Three of them were plump and dark, and one was tall and slenderer than the others, and she had blonde hair. They were all clad in lacy step-ins, and they immediately invited us upstairs, speaking rapidly in French and telling us what pleasures they would provide us. Sorel translated for me, telling me what a pity it was that I couldn't understand them and their argot.

"It's as good as your Chicago argot," he added.

He told them I was an American, and with this information their interest in me increased. The girl next to me was fleshy, and she had soft, dark eyes and dark, bobbed hair. She reminded me in a vague way of a girl I had once known but whose name I couldn't remember. Then I remembered that she reminded me of a girl from a small town in Texas whom I had met at a party in my fourth year of high school, and whom I had asked for a date. I hadn't gotten the date. I looked at this dark-eyed, plump, French prostitute in *deshabille*, a French country girl, and thought of the girl from Texas.

In the meantime, she and the other girls had kept up their rapid, saucy chatter. Sorel told them that he and I both had "*femmes fidèles*." They laughed at us contemptuously and also with bewilderment. They couldn't understand why "*femmes fidèles*" should interfere with our going upstairs with them. They didn't believe us, and continued to urge us, Sorel translating what

they said. If we didn't want to go upstairs with them, then there was something wrong with us. The girl beside me asked Sorel about me. He said I was a writer and used the word "*talent*." The dark-eyed girl looked at me, wide eyed for a moment, and then she laughed sarcastically. She winked at me suggestively. The other girls talked to me rapidly, but as they used an argot I couldn't possibly make out what they were saying, and yet, at the same time, I knew. They wanted me to take one of them upstairs. They were promising me satisfaction. And they were taunting me, insulting me, and laughing at me.

This went on for about ten more minutes, and we all sat drinking. Then the girls became convinced that we weren't customers. But they remained sitting with us because there were no other customers or prospective customers in the establishment. But at least they were getting drinks and smoking our cigarettes. They asked if I didn't have American cigarettes, but I said I'd come to like *Gaulloise Blue* and only smoked those. This pleased Sorel, whose French chauvinism carried down to the smallest detail.

The girls sang for me. I listened to them moodily, wondering what the words of the song meant and why they seemed to me to be so gay and spirited, so attractive. I liked the way they tossed their heads, the smiles that came and went on their faces, and their fresh and inviting appearance.

"Do you know what they're singing?" Sorel asked me.

I didn't. He told me. It was a song in which they wished that I were ordure floating on the Seine. Then they launched into new torrents of insults. They all spoke at once, cut in on one another, talked rapidly, and to me there were mingled notes of gaiety and self-pity in their voices. I listened and watched them and liked them. Had I been alone, I should have been more than tempted to go upstairs. To be close to one of them promised an experience that might be very human. I might touch the pulse of a fellow creature, although she now understood me as little as I could understand her. They were cynical and young, and yet, as they rambled on, they seemed like simple girls, like children. They were having fun, and undoubtedly they were enjoying themselves more by talking to me, insulting me, calling me names—since I didn't understand what they were saying—singing songs about me in an argot, than they should have had by going upstairs with me. They found some release in these forms of expression, perhaps as much as I often found in writing. I had something to forget, a hurt feeling to let sink out of my consciousness. The death of our little boy, only five days after his birth, had left me with such a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness. It had forced into my mind moody reflections on the ultimate powerlessness of man. And these reflections came back as I sat in a corner of the Sphinx with Sorel and these girls. It was clear that they looked on me with contempt. I, watching them, sipping beer and smoking, thought of them as little girls, as children. Paris sophistication in sin, so-called, was no different from what

sophistication in sin was in Chicago or in New York. And I couldn't help but believe that the cynicism of these girls was merely skin deep. I even envied them this shallow cynicism.

They continued to speak in torrents of abuse. The girl beside me laughed. Then she said something, and the others laughed. Another of the girls looked at me and patted her breast. The dark-eyed girl beside me took my hand and laid it on her round thigh. The desires I had felt a few moments before were gone. I took my hand away and patted her head, as though she were a small girl. Then the conversation went flat. We just sat, all of us silent. I happened casually to take an old but shiny cigarette case out of my pocket. I had bought it for ten cents in New York. It worked badly. When the dark-eyed girl beside me saw it, she was fascinated with it. Her face lit up with childlike wonder. She looked at it as a child would at a bright new toy.

"Vous le désirez?" I asked her.

She nodded her head eagerly.

I handed her the cigarette case. She clutched it, stared at it, stared at me with suspicion, and said something in French.

"She wants to know if she can have it."

"Oui" I told her.

Her face broke into a wide and grateful smile. Then she looked with pride at the other girls. She spoke to them, to me, to Sorel.

"She's saying that she curses you and sings insulting songs about you, and then you give her a present. She doesn't understand you. She wants to know if all Americans are like you."

Now the girls became friendlier. I talked about America, and Sorel translated my remarks. They listened and no longer urged us to go upstairs with them. And when we left, they asked us to come back. The dark-eyed girl clutched the tawdry ten-cent cigarette case, looked at me with simplicity on her round and pretty face, and said:

"Merci, merci bien, m'sieur."

PAUL VINCENT CARROLL

SHE WENT BY GENTLY

(For Frank)

IT WAS CLOSE ON THREE WHEN THE KNOCK CAME IN THE NIGHT. She was out of bed on the instant in her old flannelette nightgown, with her silver-grey hair tossed down her back. The night-light was flickering quietly as, in the shadows by the elm tree outside, she discerned Manahan's unshaven face under the battered hat.

"The pains is bad on the girl," came his voice. "I think maybe it's surely her time."

"Go before me fast and have plenty of hot water," she answered. "I'll be at your heels with Frank."

She heard his foot in the night hurrying off as she drew on her heavy dress over the nightgown. Himself stirred and put his beard irascibly outside the blankets.

"You'll go none," he snapped. "A slut like that, that gets her child outside of priest and law. Four miles uphill on a mountain road and the mists swarmin'."

"I'll go," she said quietly, and crossing, she ruffled Frank's unruly hair on the little camp bed. "Be risin', Frank, and let you carry the lantern for me to Manahan's."

"If there was just a drop o' tay before we'd start, ma," he protested sleepily.

"There's no time, son."

"A grand pass we've come to, in this country," grumbled himself. "Encouragin' the huzzies and the sluts to be shameless. I'd let her suffer. A good bellyful o' sufferin' would keep her from doin' it again."

He moved coughingly into the deep warm hollow she had vacated in the bed. The strictures of his uncharitable piety followed her into the silver and ebony of the mountainy night. She went gently . . . her feet almost noiseless. There was an inward grace in her that spilt out and over her physical lineaments, lending them a strange liteness and beauty of movement. Frank was a little ahead of her, swinging the storm lantern. He was munching a currant scone plastered with butter. His sturdy little legs took the steep sharp-pebbled incline with careless grace. Now and again, he mannishly kicked a stone from his path and whistled in the dark.

"Careful now, Frank, in case you'd slip over the bank in the dark," she admonished.

"Och, ma," he protested, "the way you talk! You'd think I wasn't grew up. It makes little of a fella."

She smiled and watched him lovingly in the silver dark. He was her youngest. The others had all followed the swallows into the mighty world. Martin was in America, Annie in England, Matthew

in Glasgow, Paddy in the Navy, Mary Kate a nursemaid in Canada, Michael was at rest somewhere in Italy. His C.O. had said in a letter that he had died well. If that meant that he had had the priest in his last hours, then God be praised, for he was her wayward one. She preferred him dying full of grace to dying full of glory. . . . But Frank was still with her. He had her eyes and gentleness and the winning tilt of the head. It would be good to have him to close her weary eyes at the end of all . . .

They had now crossed the cockeyed little bridge over a dashing tawny stream and the mountains came near her and about her like mighty elephants gathered in a mystic circle for some high purpose. Everywhere in the vast silvery empire of the dark there was the deep silence of the eternal, except for the rebellious chattering of the mountain streams racing with madcap abandon to the lough below. They were the *enfants terribles* of the mighty house, keeping it awake and uneasy. Now and again a cottage lifted a sleepy eye out of its feathery thatch, smiled at her knowingly and slumbered again. All of them knew her . . . knew of her heroism, her quiet skilled hands, her chiding, coaxing voice in the moments of peril. . . . In each of them she had been the leading actress in the great primitive drama of birth.

The climb was now gruelling and Frank took her arm pantingly. The lantern threw its yellow ray merrily ahead. All would be well.

She ruffled his hair playfully, and smiled secretly under the black mask of the night.

At a mischievous bend on the mountain path, the Manahan cottage suddenly jumped out of the mist like a sheep dog and welcomed them with a blaze of wild, flowering creepers. Inside, the middle-aged labourer was bending over a dark deep chimney nook. A turf fire burned underneath on the floor. From a sooty hook far up, a rude chain hung down and supported a large pot of boiling water. She nodded approvingly and donning her overalls moved away in the direction of the highly-pitched cries from an inner room.

"If there's anythin' else I can do . . ." he called, half-shyly, after her.

"Keep a saucepan of gruel thin and hot," she answered. "And put the bottle of olive oil on the hob in case we'd need it. Play about, Frank, and behave yourself till I call you."

She went smilingly to the bed and looked down at the flushed tearful face, the big bloodshot eyes and the glossy tossed hair of the girl. No more than eighteen, she thought, but a well-developed little lass with a full luscious mouth and firm shapely breasts. Jim Cleary who skipped to England in time had had a conquest worth his while . . . The little rebel, caught in the ruthless trap of Nature, grabbed her hands beseechingly, held on to them hysterically and yelled.

"Oh, Maura, ma'am, please, please, please . . ." she sobbed.

Maura chaffed her hands, soothed her gently, clacked her tongue admonishingly and pretended to be very disappointed at

her behaviour.

"Now, now, now, Sadie," she reproved her. "A fine soldier *you* are! When I was here at *your* comin', your mother, God rest her, bit her lip hard and said no word at all. Come on now, and be your mother's daughter."

"Ah, sure how could I be like me poor dead mother, and me like this, and all agin me?" sobbed Sadie.

"Am I agin ye, child?" soothed Maura, "and I after walkin' four miles of darkness to be with you!"

The tears came now but silently, as Maura's skilful hands warmed to her work

Frank remained in the kitchen at a loss until suddenly the door opened and a large nanny goat sailed in with perfect equanimity and balefully contemplated this stranger on home ground. Frank looked askance at her full-length beard and her formidable pair of horns, but this was of small consequence to the goat which advanced on Frank and in the wink of an eye had whipped his handkerchief out of his top pocket and stuffed it in her mouth. Frank's protest brought an assurance from Manahan who was stooped over the fire bringing the gruel to the boil.

"She'll not touch you," he said without turning his head.

"But she has me handkerchief," protested Frank.

"Ah, sure isn't she only playing with you!" returned Manahan heedlessly.

But by this time the goat had consumed the handkerchief with terrific relish, and was about to make a direct attack on the sleeve of his jersey. Frank dashed for the door with the goat after him. In the little yard he dived behind the water barrel that caught the rain-water from the roof. The goat snuffed past him in the darkness, and Frank hastily retraced his steps to the kitchen and barred the door.

He was just in time to see his mother put a generous spoonful of butter into a bowl of thin steaming gruel.

"Go in and feed this to your daughter, and coax her to take it," she directed Manahan. "She's quiet and aisy now and all will be well." He obeyed her shyly and without a word.

"You must be a big grown-up fella tonight and help your ma, Frank," she said.

"Anythin' you say, ma," he answered. "What is it?"

The baby had come forth without a cry. It was limp and devoid of any sign of life. She carried it quickly but calmly to the open peat fire, as close to the grimy chain as the heat would allow. It was naked and upside down. Frank, under her calm directions, held it firmly by its miniature ankles.

"Be a good son now and don't let it fall," she warned him, and plastering her own hands with the warm olive oil, she started to work methodically on the tiny body. Up, down and across the little chest, lungs and buttocks went the skilful fingers rhythmically until the newborn skin glistened like a silver-wrought piece of gossamer. The long minutes went by heavily. The oil lamp flickered and went out, leaving the dancing rays and shadows of the fire to light this crude drama with its eternal theme. Five

minutes, seven, ten without fruit or the promise of fruit But the moving fingers went on with rhythmic ruthlessness, searching for the spark that must surely be hidden there in a fold of the descending darkness. Frank's face was flushed, his eyes gathered up with the pain of exertion, his breath coming in spasms. On his mother's forehead beads of sweat gathered, rivuletted down the grey gentle face and flowed on to the newborn body to be ruthlessly merged in the hot oily waves of her massaging.

Then suddenly, as the tension had reached almost to the unbearable, a thin, highly-pitched cry came from the tiny spume-filled lips. She seized the baby, pushed Frank from her, turned it upright, grabbed a chipped, handleless cup of cold water and even as the fluttering life hesitated on the miniature features for one solitary second to receive its divine passport and the symbol of its eternal heritage, she poured a little of the water on the tiny skull and said, "I baptise you, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

She wrapped the little corpse in the remnant of a torn sheet, without tear or trace of any sentiment, placed it in a drawer she took from the crazy wardrobe, and having made the Sign of the Cross over it gave it no further attention.

When she saw that the bowl was almost empty of gruel, she chased Manahan out with a gesture and settled the little mother comfortably. She was adjusting her wet, tearstained hair over her pillow when suddenly she felt Sadie's arms tightly about her neck. Her big eyes were quiet now and the pain and the travail were gone, but the tears came rushing from them again as Maura kissed and soothed her.

"I wish I had me mother," she sobbed. "Maura, ma'am, I'm goin' to be a good girl from now on."

"You have never been a bad one, darlin'," coaxed Maura, tucking the faded bedclothes into her back. "A wee bit foolish maybe, but the world and the years will learn ye. Sleep now and I'll see you tonight."

She re-donned her old black cloak in the kitchen.

"I'll tell Maloney to bring you up a white box," she said to Manahan. "It will save you the journey down."

On the mountain path she went noiselessly, with Frank a little ahead, carrying the extinguished lantern. The dawn greeted her from the heights with far-flung banners of amber and amethyst. The heights themselves ceased from their eternal brooding for a brief moment of time and gave her a series of benign obeisances. The racing rivulets tossed her name from one to the other on the Lord's commendation. The sun himself, new-risen and generous, sent a very special ray of light that caught up her tossed hair and rolled it in priceless silver.

"Why do men lie prone in their beds," she murmured, "and the great glory of God washin' the hills with holy fire?"

Shamus Dunne was taking in his two nanny goats for the milking as she passed his cottage.

"The blessin' o' God light on ye, woman," he said, touching his wind-swept hat.

"And on yourself too, Shamus," she answered. "How is the little fella now?"

"Ah, sure isn't he over a stone weight already. Ah, woman-oh, wasn't it the near thing that night? Ah, sure only for yourself, wasn't me whole world lost?"

"Arrah, men always think the worst at such times," she answered smilingly. "Sure, there was never any great fear of the worst that night! Herself, within, is much too good a soldier for that!"

Frank had now discovered a salmon tin and was kicking it vigorously before him. She took out her rosary at the bend where the path dips perilously between two ageless boulders, and as she trudged along, she began counting the beads effortlessly. There on the heights at dawn, caught between the gold and the deepening blue of day, she might have been a pilgrim out of a Europe that has long since vanished, or maybe a Ruth garnering the lost and discredited straws of the age-old Christian thought.

Frank had now lobbed his salmon tin on the lofty fork of a tree, and when she caught up with him, he took her arm undemonstratively. Himself would be up now, she thought, with his braces hanging, and maybe a hole in his sock that she had overlooked. He wouldn't be able to find the soap and the towel even if they were both staring at him, and of course if he blew the fire, even with a thousand breaths, it would never light for him But no matter now. Thanks be to God, there was an egg left in the cracked bowl that would do his breakfast. If the little white pullet in the barn laid in the old butter box, Frank would have one, too, with the help o' God When the cock himself laid an egg, Glory be, *she'd* get one all to herself!

They crossed the rickety bridge, as the dawn was losing its virgin colour. Frank saw a squirrel and rushed ahead of her. She paused for a moment and contemplated the restless waters. They looked to her like a rich tawny wine poured out of some capacious barrel by some high ruthless hand who had suddenly discovered the futility of all riches. A May blossom rushed under the incongruous arch and emerged to get caught between a moss-covered stone and a jagged piece of rock. There was a turmoil and pain for a moment, and then it freed itself and rushed on. She wondered if it was the little soul she had lately saved, rushing on in a virgin panic to the eternal waters Maybe it was Maybe she was just an imaginative old fool Ah, sure what harm anyway to be guessing at infinite mysteries, and she so small on a mountain road?

Himself met her in the stone-floored kitchen. Indeed, yes, he was trailing his braces, and the sulky fire was just giving a last gasp before expiring.

"I suppose you saved the slut's bastard," he commented acidly.

She bent on her knees to blow the fire aflame again.

"I saved him," she answered, and a flame leaped suddenly upwards and made a sweet and unforgettable picture of her face.

SAMUEL BECKETT

EXTRACT FROM WATT

THE MUSIC-ROOM WAS A LARGE BARE WHITE ROOM. THE PIANO was in the window. The head, and neck, in plaster, very white, of Buxtehude, was on the mantelpiece. A ravanastron hung, on the wall, from a nail, like a plover.

Not Mr Gall Senior, but Mr Gall Junior, was tuning the piano, to Watt's great surprise. Mr Gall Senior was standing in the middle of the room, perhaps listening. Watt did not take this to mean that Mr Gall Junior was the true piano-tuner, and Mr Gall Senior simply a poor blind old man, hired for the occasion, no. But he took it rather to mean that Mr Gall Senior, feeling his end at hand, and anxious that his son should follow in his footsteps, was putting the finishing touches to a hasty instruction, before it was too late.

While Watt looked round, for a place to set down his tray, Mr Gall Junior brought his work to a close. He reassembled the piano case, put back his tools in their bag, and stood up.

The mice have returned, he said.

The elder said nothing. Watt wondered if he had heard.

Nine dampers remain, said the younger, and an equal number of hammers.

Not corresponding I hope, said the elder.

In one case, said the younger.

The elder had nothing to say to this.

The strings are in flitters, said the younger.

The elder had nothing to say to this either.

The piano is doomed in my opinion, said the younger.

The piano-tuner also, said the elder.

The pianist also, said the younger.

This was perhaps the principal incident of Watt's early days in Mr Knott's house.

In a sense it resembled all the incidents of note proposed to Watt during his stay in Mr. Knott's house, and of which a certain number will be recorded in this place, without addition, or subtraction, and in a sense not.

It resembled them in the sense that it was not ended, when it was past, but continued to unfold, in Watt's head, from beginning to end, over and over again, the complex connexions of its lights and shadows, the passing from silence to sound and from sound to silence, the stillness before the movement and the stillness after, the quickenings and retardings, the approaches and the separations, all the shifting detail of its march and ordinance, according to the irrevocable caprice of its taking place. It resembled them in the vigour with which it developed

a purely plastic content and gradually lost, in the nice processes of its light, its sound, its impacts and its rhythm, all meaning, even the most literal.

Thus the scene in the music-room, with the two Galls, ceased very soon to signify for Watt a piano tuned, an obscure family and professional relation, an exchange of judgments more or less intelligible, and so on, if indeed it had ever signified such things, and became a mere example of light commenting bodies, and stillness motion, and silence sound, and comment comment.

This fragility of the outer meaning had a bad effect on Watt, for it caused him to seek for another, for some meaning of what had passed, in the image of how it had passed.

The most meagre, the least plausible, would have satisfied Watt, who had not seen a symbol, nor executed an interpretation, since the age of fourteen, or fifteen, and who had lived, miserably it is true, among face values all his adult life, face values at least for him. Some see the flesh before the bones, and some see the bones before the flesh, and some never see the bones at all, and some never see the flesh at all, never never see the flesh at all. But whatever it was Watt saw, with the first look, that was enough for Watt, that had always been enough for Watt, more than enough for Watt. And he had experienced literally nothing, since the age of fourteen, or fifteen, of which in retrospect he was not content to say, That is what happened then. He could recall, not indeed with any satisfaction, but as ordinary occasions, the time when his dead father appeared to him in a wood, with his trousers rolled up over his knees and his shoes and socks in his hand ; or the time when in his surprise at hearing a voice urging him, in terms of unusual coarseness, to do away with himself, he narrowly escaped being knocked down, by a dray ; or the time when alone in a rowing-boat, far from land, he suddenly smelt flowering currant ; or the time when an old lady of delicate upbringing, and advantageous person, for she was amputated well above the knee, whom he had importuned with his assiduities on no fewer than three distinct occasions, unstrapped her wooden leg, and laid aside her crutch. Here no tendency appeared, on the part of his father's trousers for example, to break up into an arrangement of appearances, grey, flaccid and probably fistular, or of his father's legs to vanish in the farce of their properties, no, but his father's legs and trousers, as then seen, in the wood, and subsequently brought to mind, remained legs and trousers, and not only legs and trousers, but his father's legs and trousers, that is to say quite different from any of the legs and trousers that Watt had ever seen, and he had seen a great quantity, both of legs and trousers, in his time. The incident of the Galls, on the contrary, ceased so rapidly to have even the paltry significance of two men, come to tune a piano, and exchanging a few words, as men will do, and going, that this seemed rather to belong to some story heard long before, an instant in the life of another, ill told, ill heard, and more than half forgotten.

So Watt did not know what had happened. He did not care, to do him justice, what had happened. But he felt the need to think that such and such a thing had happened then, the need to be able to say, when the scene began to unroll its sequences, Yes, I remember that is what happened then.

This need remained with Watt, this need not always satisfied, during the greater part of his stay in Mr Knott's house. For the incident of the Galls father and son was followed by others of a similar kind, incidents that is to say of great formal brilliance and undeterminable purport.

Watt's stay in Mr Knott's house was less agreeable, on this account, than it would have been, if such incidents had been unknown, or his attitude towards them less anxious, that is to say, if Mr. Knott's house had been another house, or Watt another man. For outside Mr Knott's house, and of course grounds, such incidents were unknown, or so Watt supposed. And Watt could not accept them for what they perhaps were, the simple games that time plays with space, now with these toys, and now with those, but was obliged, because of his peculiar character, to enquire into what they meant, oh not into what they really meant, his character was not so peculiar as all that, but into what they might be induced to mean, with the help of a little patience, a little ingenuity.

But what was this pursuit of meaning, in this indifference to meaning? And to what did it tend? These are delicate questions. For when Watt at last spoke of this time it was a time long past, and of which his recollections were, in a sense, perhaps less clear than he would have wished, though too clear for his liking, in another. Add to this the notorious difficulty of recapturing, at will, modes of feeling peculiar to a certain time, and to a certain place, and perhaps also to a certain state of the health, when the time is past, and the place left, and the body struggling with quite a new situation. Add to this the obscurity of Watt's communications, the rapidity of his utterance and the eccentricities of his syntax, as elsewhere recorded. Add to this the material conditions in which these communications were made. Add to this the scant aptitude to receive of him to whom they were proposed. Add to this the scant aptitude to give of him to whom they were committed. And some idea will perhaps be obtained of the difficulties experienced in formulating, not only such matters as those here in question, but the entire body of Watt's experience, from the moment of his entering Mr Knott's establishment to the moment of his leaving it.

But before passing from the Galls father and son to matters less litigious, or less tediously litigious, it seems advisable that the little that is known, on this subject, should be said. For the incident of the Galls father and son was the first and type of many. And the little that is known about it has not yet all been said. Much has been said, but not all.

Not that many things remain to be said, on the subject of the

Galls father and son, for they do not. For only three or four things remain to be said, in this connexion. And three or four things are not really many, in comparison with the number of things that might have been known, and said, on this subject, and now never shall.

What distressed Watt in this incident of the Galls father and son, and in subsequent similar incidents, was not so much that he did not know what had happened, for he did not care what had happened, as that nothing had happened, that a thing that was nothing had happened, with the utmost formal distinctness, and that it continued to happen, in his mind, he supposed, though he did not know exactly what that meant, and though it seemed to be outside him, before him, about him, and so on, inexorably to unroll its phases, beginning with the first (the knock that was not a knock) and ending with the last (the door closing that was not a door closing), and omitting none, uninvoked, at the most unexpected moments, and the most inopportune. Yes, Watt could not accept, as no doubt Erskine could not accept, and as no doubt Arsene and Walter and Vincent had been unable to accept, that nothing had happened, with all the clarity and solidity of something, and that it revisited him in such a way that he was forced to submit to it all over again, to hear the same sounds, see the same lights, touch the same surfaces, and so on, as when they had first involved him in their unintelligible intricacies. If he had been able to accept it, then perhaps it would not have revisited him, and this would have been a great saving of vexation, to put it mildly. But he could not accept it, could not bear it. One wonders sometimes where Watt thought he was. In a culture-park?

But if he could say, when the knock came, the knock become a knock, on the door become a door, in his mind, presumably in his mind, whatever that might mean, Yes, I remember, that is what happened then, if then he could say that, then he thought that then the scene would end, and trouble him no more, as the appearance of his father with his trousers rolled up and his shoes and socks in his hands troubled him no more, because he could say, when it began, Yes, yes, I remember, that was when my father appeared to me, in the woods, dressed for wading. But to elicit something from nothing requires a certain skill, and Watt was not always successful, in his efforts to do so. Not that he was always unsuccessful either, for he was not. For if he had been always unsuccessful, how would it have been possible for him to speak of the Galls father and son, and of the piano they had come all the way from town to tune, and of their tuning it, and of their passing the remarks they had passed, the one to the other, in the way he did? No, he could never have spoken of all these things, if all had continued to mean nothing, as some continued to mean nothing, that is to say, right up to the end. But if Watt was sometimes unsuccessful, and sometimes successful, as in the affair of the Galls father and son, in foisting

a meaning there where no meaning appeared, he was most often neither the one, nor the other. For Watt considered, with reason, that he was successful, in this enterprise, when he could evolve, from the meticulous phantoms that beset him, a hypothesis proper to disperse them, as often as this might be found necessary. There was nothing, in this operation, at variance with Watt's habits of mind. For to explain had always been to exorcise, for Watt. And he considered that he was unsuccessful, when he failed to do so. And he considered that he was neither wholly successful, nor wholly unsuccessful, when the hypothesis evolved lost its virtue, after one or two applications, and had to be replaced by another, which in its turn had to be replaced by another, which in due course ceased to be of the least assistance, and so on. And that is what happened, in the majority of cases. Now to give examples of Watt's failures, and of Watt's successes, and of Watt's partial successes, in this connexion, is so to speak impossible. For when he speaks, for example, of the incident of the Galls father and son, does he speak of it in terms of the unique hypothesis that was required, to deal with it, and render it innocuous, or in terms of the latest, or in terms of some other of the series? For when Watt spoke of an incident of this kind, he did not necessarily do so in terms of the unique hypothesis, or of the latest, though this at first sight seems the only possible alternative, and the reason why he did not, why it is not, is this, that when one of the series of hypotheses, with which Watt laboured to preserve his peace of mind, lost its virtue, and had to be laid aside, and another set up in its place, then it sometimes happened that the hypothesis in question, after a sufficient period of rest, recovered its virtue and could be made to serve again, in the place of another, whose usefulness had come to an end, for the time being at least. To such an extent is this true, that one is sometimes tempted to wonder, with reference to two or even three incidents related by Watt as separate and distinct, if they are not in reality the same incident, variously interpreted. As to giving an example of the second event, namely the failure, that is clearly quite out of the question. For there we have to do with events that resisted all Watt's efforts to saddle them with meaning, and a formula, so that he could neither think of them, nor speak of them, but only suffer them, when they recurred, though it seems probable that they recurred no more, at the period of Watt's revelation, to me, but were as though they had never been.

Finally, to return to the incident of the Galls father and son, as related by Watt, did it have that meaning for Watt at the time of its taking place, and then lose that meaning, and then recover it? Or did it have some quite different meaning for Watt at the time of its taking place, and then lose that meaning, and then receive that, alone or among others, which it exhibited in Watt's relation? Or did it have no meaning whatever for Watt at the moment of its taking place, were there neither Galls

nor piano then, but only an unintelligible succession of changes, from which Watt finally extracted the Galls and the piano, in self-defence? These are most delicate questions. Watt spoke of it as involving, in the original, the Galls and the piano, but he was obliged to do this, even if the original had nothing to do with the Galls and the piano. For even if the Galls and the piano were long posterior to the phenomena destined to become them, Watt was obliged to think, and speak, of the incident, even at the moment of its taking place, as the incident of the Galls and the piano, if he was to think and speak of it at all, and it may be assumed that Watt would never have thought or spoken about such incidents, if he had not been under the absolute necessity of doing so. But generally speaking it seems probable that the meaning attributed to this particular type of incident, by Watt, in his relations, was now the initial meaning that had been lost and then recovered, and now a meaning quite distinct from the initial meaning, and now a meaning evolved, after a delay of varying length, and with greater or less pains, from the initial absence of meaning.

One more word on this subject.

Watt learned towards the end of his stay in Mr Knott's house to accept that nothing had happened, that a nothing had happened, learned to bear it and even, in a shy way, to like it. But then it was too late.

That then is that in which the incident of the Galls father and son resembled other incidents, of which it was merely the first in time, other incidents of note. But to say, as has been said, that the incident of the Galls father and son had this aspect in common with all the subsequent incidents of note, is perhaps to go a little too far. For not all the subsequent incidents of note, with which Watt was called upon to deal, during his stay in Mr Knott's house, and of course grounds, presented this aspect, no, but some meant something from the very beginning, and continued to mean it, with all the tenacity of, for example, the flowering currant in the rowing-boat, or the capitulation of the one-legged Mrs Watson, right up to the end.

As to that in which the incident of the Galls father and son differed from the subsequent incidents of its category, that is no longer clear, and cannot therefore be stated, with profit. But it may be taken that the difference was so nice as with advantage to be neglected, in a synopsis of this kind.

Watt thought sometimes of Arsene. He wondered what had become of the duck. He had not seen her leave the kitchen with Arsene. But then he had not seen Arsene leave the kitchen either. And as the bird was nowhere to be found, in the house or in the garden, Watt supposed she must have slipped away, with her master. He wondered also what Arsene had meant, nay, he wondered what Arsene had said, on the evening of his departure. For his declaration had entered Watt's ears only by fits, and his understanding, like all that enters the ears

only by fits, hardly at all. He had realized, to be sure, that Arsene was speaking, and in a sense to him, but something had prevented him, perhaps his fatigue, from paying attention to what was being said and from enquiring into what was being meant. Watt was now inclined to regret this, for from Erskine no information was to be had. Not that Watt desired information, for he did not. But he desired words to be applied to his situation, to Mr Knott, to the house, to the grounds, to his duties, to the stairs, to his bedroom, to the kitchen, and in a general way to the conditions of being in which he found himself. For Watt now found himself in the midst of things which, if they consented to be named, did so as it were with reluctance. And the state in which Watt found himself resisted formulation in a way no state had ever done, in which Watt had ever found himself, and Watt had found himself in a great many states, in his day. Looking at a pot, for example, or thinking of a pot, at one of Mr Knott's pots, of one of Mr Knott's pots, it was in vain that Watt said, Pot, pot. Well perhaps not quite in vain, but very nearly. For it was not a pot, the more he looked, the more he reflected, the more he felt sure of that, that it was not a pot at all. It resembled a pot, it was almost a pot, but it was not a pot of which one could say, Pot, pot, and be comforted. It was in vain that it answered, with unexceptionable adequacy, all the purposes, and performed all the offices, of a pot, it was not a pot. And it was just this hairbreadth departure from the nature of a true pot that so excruciated Watt. For if the approximation had been less close, then Watt would have been less anguished. For then he would not have said, This is a pot, and yet not a pot, no, but then he would have said, This is something of which I do not know the name. And Watt preferred on the whole having to do with things of which he did not know the name, though this too was painful to Watt, to having to do with things of which the known name, the proven name, was not the name, any more, for him. For he could always hope, of a thing of which he had never known the name, that he would learn the name, some day, and so be tranquillized. But he could not look forward to this in the case of a thing of which the true name had ceased, suddenly, or gradually, to be the true name for Watt. For the pot remained a pot, Watt felt sure of that, for everyone but Watt. For Watt alone it was not a pot, any longer.

Then when he turned for reassurance to himself, who was not Mr Knott's, in the sense that the pot was, who had come from without and whom the without would take again, he made the distressing discovery that of himself too he could no longer affirm anything that did not seem as false as if he had affirmed it of a stone. Not that Watt was in the habit of affirming things of himself, for he was not, but he found it a help, from time to time, to be able to say, with some appearance of reason, Watt

is a man, all the same, Watt is a man, or, Watt is the street, with thousands of fellow-creatures within call. And Watt was greatly troubled by this tiny little thing, more troubled perhaps than he had ever been by anything, and Watt had been frequently and exceedingly troubled, in his time, by this imperceptible, no, hardly imperceptible, since he perceived it, by this indefinable thing that prevented him from saying, with conviction, and to his belief, of the object that was so like a pot, that it was a pot, and of the creature that still in spite of everything presented a large number of exclusively human characteristics, that it was a man. And Watt's need of semantic succour was at times so great that he would set to trying names on things, and on himself, almost as a woman hats. Thus of the pseudo-pot he would say, after reflexion, It is a shield, or, growing bolder, It is a raven, and so on. But the pot proved as little a shield, or a raven, or any other of the things that Watt called it, as a pot. As for himself, though he could no longer call it a man, as he had used to do, with the intuition that he was perhaps not talking nonsense, yet he could not imagine what else to call it, if not a man. But Watt's imagination had never been a lively one. So he continued to think of himself as a man, as his mother had taught him, when she said, There's a good little man, or, There's a bonny little man, or, There's a clever little man. But for all the relief that this afforded him he might just as well have thought of himself as a box, or an urn.

It was principally for these reasons that Watt would have been glad to hear Erskine's voice, wrapping up safe in words the kitchen space, the extraordinary newel-lamp, the stairs that were never the same and of which even the number of steps seemed to vary, from day to day, and from night to morning, and many other things in the house, and the bushes without and other garden growths, that so often prevented Watt from taking the air, even on the finest day, so that he grew pale, and constipated, and even the light as it came and went and the clouds that climbed the sky, now slow, now rapid, and generally from west to east, or sank down towards the earth on the other side. Not that the fact of Erskine's naming the pot, or of his saying to Watt, My dear fellow, or, My good man, or God damn you, would have changed the pot into a pot, or Watt into a man, for Watt, for it would not. But it would have shown that at least for Erskine the pot was a pot, and Watt a man. Not that the fact of the pot's being a pot, or Watt's being a man, for Erskine, would have caused the pot to be a pot, or Watt to be a man, for Watt, for it would not. But it would perhaps have lent a little colour to the hope, sometimes entertained by Watt, that he was in poor health, owing to the efforts of his body to adjust itself to an unfamiliar milieu, and that these would be successful, in the end, and his health restored, and things appear, and himself appear, in their ancient guise, and consent to be named, with the

time-honoured names, and forgotten. Not that Watt longed at all times for this restoration, of things, of himself, to their comparative innocuousness, for he did not. For there were times when he felt a feeling closely resembling the feeling of satisfaction, at his being so abandoned, by the last rats. For after these there would be no more rats, not a rat left, and there were times when Watt almost welcomed this prospect, of being rid of his last rats, at last. It would be lonely to be sure, at first, and silent, after the gnawing, the scurrying, the little cries. Things and himself, they had gone with him now for so long, in the foul weather and in the less foul. Things in the ordinary sense, and then the emptiness between them, and the light high up before it reached them, and then the other thing, the high heavy hollow jointed unstable thing, that trampled down the grasses, and scattered the sand, in its pursuits. But most often he found himself longing for a voice, for Erskine's voice; since he was alone with Erskine, to speak of the little world of Mr Knott's establishment, with the old words, the old credentials.

Perhaps if Watt had spoken to Erskine, Erskine would have spoken to Watt, in reply. But Watt was not so far gone as all that.

(An unexpurgated edition of "Watt" will be published in the late spring by "Collection Merlin". Readers may obtain further information from The Business Manager, Merlin, Librairie Mistral, 37 rue de la Bûcherie, Paris 5e, France.)

A MOUNTAIN BIRD

THIS BIRD IS RARE, A FEMALE BIRD, UNKNOWN TO ORNITHOLOGISTS, she has many names. Mrs Jones Camphorated and Mrs Misery Mountain are the two most popular, and she deserves them all. This bird is four foot eleven inches in height, tense, provocative, tight-lipped, stony-eyed. She carries the world's miseries on her tight little back, and wearing her fierce little boots, ugly and hard, could you feel, breast great mountains of iron. Behind the small frame, inside the hugged coat, hugged and clutching, there lies some endeavour of bone. I do not know who gave her these various names, and it does not matter very much. What I do know is that should one happen to be going up the mountain, she is bound to be coming down. She lives in a bleak cottage, one up and one down, around which in the winter time winds curl like many vicious knives, and in mid-summer is drenched by sun, but to this bird seasons are un-noticed, they might be all alike. She is at all times aggressive, companioned by a cold in the chest or the head, and by some queer accident her diminutive son suffers at the same time, as though in sympathy, almost one might say out of sheer loyalty. This boy is nine, three foot one, but will never be bigger than the parent bird.

I ruminate on these names, and finally think that Mrs Bitch, Mountain is the one most suitable to her. The child with the old face, who might have emerged from a cave, been born by a tarn, would be hard to christen. These two birds are at home with eagles, buzzards, crows, hares and the golden fox. Every morning at the same hour, almost the same minute I hear the fierce little feet pass by my window, and know that the parent bird is on her way to the village, having come down nearly four miles of mountain path. Snuffing the morning air, a hand to her chest, dragging the child beside her, who, unable to keep up with this ruthless, headlong, somewhat mad yet quite rhythmic gait, trots and sniffs in time with his mother. Those feet, as they tear down the road are signals, their reverberations are carried forward and everybody knows that the two mountain birds are shortly due to arrive. They never smile. Why smile? Never laugh. Why laugh? A man passes by on his bicycle, says, "mornin', Mrs", but she does not answer. And soon he is in the village, in the shop, the Post Office, the word is around, "Mrs Jones is on the way, can't you smell the camphorated?"

As I say, one is going up the mountain, and she is coming down. The conversation runs to pattern.

"Mornin', Mrs Jones."

"Mornin', mister."

"Looks like being a nice day."

"It'll rain, mister, you see."

"And how is the boss?"

This produces the inevitable scowl. I look at the old-faced child, noticing his running nose. "And how is Evan bach, this morning?"

Mrs Bitch replies for him. "Him's simply drippin' with a cold this mornin' mister, same's me, can't seem to get rid of the bloody thing, never."

"Evan bach *does* always seem to be wiping his nose."

She does not answer.

"Can't you get rid of these colds at all, I expect it's your damp cottage."

"No! Never will. D'you know what, mister?"

"What?"

"I'd like to set the whole bloody world on fire, that's what, mister."

The eyes behind the steel-rimmed spectacles look like two hot, tiny stones, the expression at all times fierce, it will never break under a smile. I look at the outrageous hat she has worn for years, its utterly ridiculous single feather, the same old coat. The child holds on, begrudgingly, it seems, to the hand not much bigger than his own. The whole set-up is the same, it will last their lifetimes. Well muffled, one might say bound in their clothes, camphorated pads on the chest, pills in the pocket, the harsh smell.

"Listen, mister."

But one draws back at once from the threatened confidence. the overpowering smell of the camphorated oil.

"Wish you'd tell that swine what his duty is, mister."

"What swine?"

"Sittin' on his backside all day."

"But your father's very old—"

"But he can eat, mister. Not too old for that. Break his neck one of these days, mister, that's what."

The final snarl and she has gone, and the dragged child with her. It turns its head and looks back at me, one barely notices it. I am thinking of these people, weird, fell, half mad, poetic and sad.

The male bird is as tall as the female one is short. A bold bird on Saturdays, but cowering on Sundays, since there is no place to sit but in this small damp cottage. He is fifty and looks twenty, unlike his wife, who at forty five looks a near seventy. An odd job man who never seems to have any odd jobs to do, who has managed, by some cunning, by some singular craft to become the owner of a very old motor-cycle, on which, these late Sundays he has gone roving to hidden places. He bears Sundays, bravely, sitting all day in the dark kitchen, huddled to a smoky fire beside the old man, he reads the choicest bits from the 'News of The World.' His wife growls and he laughs, only the old man

is silent. She goes on growling and he goes on laughing, about nothing, about everything, but the old man remains shrouded in his own silence. Into this silence the female bird reads laziness, contempt. Sometimes it can be infuriating, caught as she is between this and her husband's laughing. Evan, a deformed Cinderella, huddles in a corner, a lost corner, his child's eyes screwed up over an old newspaper.

Sometimes Mr Jones, one supposes in an absent moment, forgets himself, his very nature, suddenly returns scowl for scowl. Then the female bird really breaks out, turns on the silent, slobbering old man. Her husband watches, grinning. The bird yells, chases him out of the house. The male bird, the anchored husband, big, simple, wayward, harmless and hard-working, full of the best intentions, and few bad ones, watches the old man go out and he laughs. It is a kind of toleration of this creature, this scowling wife, this bird, this snarling bit of life from the mountain.

Once out, the old man makes for the nearest tree, up which he climbs and remains perched there, whilst his daughter, fuming, flings up stone after stone. The old man clutches, waits. Later he will crawl down, return to his seat by the hearth.

Inside the cottage father and son listen to the screeching mother, Evan hears his father laugh, and, still clutching his bit of old newspaper, in this dark place, and with some vision beyond that of eyes, sees.

The mountain episodes are never lost to the village, by some strange means it reaches them, as will the sound of the odd job man's motor-cycle, as he rushes through, bound for unknown regions. It is the hour of escape from the everlasting snarl.

Mother and child are indeed a couple of nature's harshest gestures. I foresee a lifetime of hard climbing for Evan, who, when he is strong enough will emulate the feats of his tiny mother, carrying sacks of coal on his back up rough mountain paths, for long miles, in all weathers. The cottage, inaccessible to transport of any kind, requires that they shall be in the fullest sense of the term, beasts of burden, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Sometimes these birds wear clogs, so that their village approach is more obvious, and once there they pass from shop to shop, the child utterly silent, his mother using the minimum of words, and, their errands over, they depart as they have come, sad, mysterious, not wanted, heads bent forward, carrying their bags and cans. "Smokes like a chimney," they say, "and, oh—it'd be nice if she smiled once."

Puffing furiously at her cigarette she and her child drag back to the mountain home. One wonders if she has ever wept. They give out no warmth, one thinks of the curve of the Arctic zone.

In the school-yard Evan plays, or tries to play with others, his movements are curiously robot, known to the bright ones as "Evans Camphorated, Sour." Does he even know that he is a child? Mother and son exist as under an ordination, rising in

the morning upon a vast sea of misery, and at day's end, tossed in the same sea. Poor Mrs. Jones. For her *nothing* is right, problems are unsolvable, she is the hostage and the victim to life itself, perhaps she suffers from some unknown, hidden and incurable malady of soul. She moves in a kind of twilight and her shadow falls across the child. Life is a series of extremes and dark corners, cul-de-sacs abound. Her questions are always abrupt, not easy to answer. A comment on the election is terse. What did you think of the "swines what has just got in?" Were they any better than "the swines what was just thrown out?"

But once, and once only I saw the child alone, and it was like some sudden visitation of grace. This huddled little figure, buried under his load, a bag strapped to his back, two heavy milkcans in little red hands, struggled heroically over icy roads, on his way to the eyrie. There was not a soul about. Then suddenly upon the air there came a tiny sound. One thought of pipes playing in the distance, and when I looked out of the window I saw that the child was singing, a long, low wordless song. It made one think of a robin breasting the winter morning, and the bite in the air. He strode bravely along between high banks, towards the frowning mountain, towards the harsh and miserable parent bird, who no doubt sat in her kitchen, thinking her furious thoughts, housing her horrible joys, coughing, puffing at her everlasting cigarette, wondering about "that world", "them swine", "him sat on his backside all day", her laughing, incomprehensible husband, and all the woes and miseries of the earth. Her world would seem as one vast mountain path, up which she must ever laboriously climb, dragging the child with her, and as they climb hope spirals down.

DENIS JOHNSTON

THE CALL TO ARMS

THIS STORY WAS TOLD TO ME ONE EVENING BY A FRIEND OF MINE across the counter of a pub in Lower Abbey Street in the City of Dublin. I believe that it's largely true because my friend Bernie would never lie to me, unless of course it paid him to do so. Bernie draws the beer and serves the spirits every night to all of us men of action and men of business who have the time to drop in, and of course, the talk often runs high about the old days and all the things we did too long ago to bear contradiction.

I am usually more impressed than I should be by big talk. Whenever I'm with geographical liars I feel that I have really been nowhere, and as for personal reminiscences about celebrities—well, they just make me feel like a leper. But perhaps most of all I feel out of it whenever tales of wars and battles are going the rounds. You know the kind. Although now I come to think of it, I have lived through a war or two and a couple of rebellions not to mention a mixed selection of minor civil commotions. Yet, though I have tried to get into most of them, I never have succeeded in firing a shot in anger in any cause however praiseworthy. I think, perhaps, that is why Bernie's experiences appealed to me so much.

Anyhow, they were all at it this night—Rugby small talk with a leaven of limericks, and of course the inevitable well-worn war news (though goodness knows 'news' is a sad misnomer), when I caught Bernie's eye across the counter as he swilled the glasses in the sink. It seemed to me that his expression of scepticism was too marked to be boredom. So I moved along thinking I'd try him.

'Bernie,' I said, 'have you ever been in a war?'

I knew from the curl of his lip that I was on to something, but his vehemence surprised me.

'No,' he said, 'I have not. An' if there was another tomorra I wouldn't join it. War's all my eye.'

I looked at Bernie with a new interest. From my knowledge of him I found it hard to believe that he had any intellectual objection to the use of physical force. From time to time I had seen him carrying out his more vigorous duties in the pub with a relish that would have been no credit to a pacifist. It was a matter that called for further investigation, so I asked him what he would have and this is what he told me:

'Them craw thumpers, who would mind them? To hear them blidderin' their old guff about this war an' that war, sure you'd take them all for ragin' yeomen. Wars is all cod. The only medal I ever got or gave was a black eye, thank God. Mind

you I didn't always think that way. Ah no. Onct I had a notion to be in one o' them flyin' columns. Ah, but them jackeens, they'd give you the sick. Sure it was all swank and jobbery gettin' into them things unless you knew someone. It doesn't signify. D'ye know.'

For a moment his words took me aback. I had never contemplated the social side of revolution in that light before. Yet after a moment's consideration I saw how reasonable it was. It was natural that they should not admit Barnie into a flying column without some knowledge of his respectability. And it was just as natural that the system should lay itself open to charges of nepotism and snobbery no less than in Aldershot or Cowes. He went on:

'Then I remember in the summer o' '22 when it was all made official an' they started batterin' the Four Courts—one lot inside holdin' Ceilidhes in the Central Hall and the other lot outside lettin' off old bombs at them from a big gun onct every half-hour as fast as they could load it—I thought to meself, well maybe it'll be different now. This is big stuff and aren't we payin' for it all ourselves? An' sure enough in a day or two didn't all the papers come out with blazing placards askin' us to join in. "The Call to Arms" it was. An' they give us a list o' Recruitin' Stations, d'ye know, where if you went they'd let you into the war an' no questions asked. Oh I remember it well. First there was Brunswick Street Police Barracks an' then there was Amiens Street Railway Station. There was the City Hall an' Portobello an' Beggarsbush. An' somewheres out in Howth too I think. Aw, when I think of it I have to laugh. Sufferin' Job. "The Call to Arms", moryah! There was me believin' every word of it an' hoppin' mad to get in on one side or the other. D'ye know.

'You see, there was this fellow Doyle out o' Cassidy's the Chemists, an' the O'Connor girl we were both mottin'. Aw, that fellow was a mean little bowsey an' there's no blottin' it out. An' the motor bike on the instalment plan sittin' outside her door all evenin' while he spread himself on the old settee airin' his medical knowledge like a windy Professor out o' the Royal College o' Surgeons. Medical knowledge me foot! The only medical knowledge that chancer had was what he'd maybe read off an old bottle an' he delivering them on his bike or maybe an odd time selling a toothbrush when the boss was out. I declare to God there was many a time I could have found it in my heart to take a runnin' lep at that gazebo when I'd had enough of his blowin' for the day.

'It was the O'Connor girl, of course, that wanted us in the War. You know the way it is with them strips. Dead nuts on politics. If it wasn't a protest it was a funeral. And when it wasn't a funeral it would be a flag day. She'd have had us in and out o' cemeteries from crack of dawn to rosey fall o' night if she couldn't have us anchored in gaol which'd be better still.

D'ye know. Ah it's the way with all them motts. Trouble an' nothin' but trouble. An' what they can't be up to themselves some fella has to do it for 'em. Looka, I often wonder what them ones will do when the country's free an' there's no gaols or cemeteries at all! They have no regard for a man that's not blidderin' with a Glasnevin wheeze, worn to a livin' corpse with route marching and hunger striking or lookin' into the clay face o' death itself.

'An' when she saw "The Call to Arms"—well, I knew it was now or never for yours truly an' I'd better get down to it at onct without any argufyin'. Well, when I said I was goin' for to be a militiaman I saw well enough that motor bikes or no motor bikes I'd taken a long lead on His Lordship. There come a look in her eyes, an' I could see she was laying me out in my shroud already with the brave smile of one that would gladly give all for the old country. I suppose His Nibs saw it too, because before the evenin' was over he was goin' to join the war as well. An' that put us back on the level so to speak. Though mind you, it was no ordinary infantryman or bombardier the like o' meself that Doyle was going to be. Aw no! None o' that for Doyle. He was going to be something special, you may be sure, with all his learnin' from washin' bottles. I declare to God I had to go home before the venem in me heart rose up an' I landed a quick one on his gob.

'Well, next morning off I goes like a gamecock in me brown boots an' leggins an' me haversack an' the old water-bottle I borreyed from the Church Lads Brigade an' me ration o' tea an' me pocket knife or slasher an' a map of the district like they tell you in all the books. Oh, I had everything. I was fit for the Dardanelles. An' I got out an' read "The Call to Arms", and went off to Brunswick Street to join the war.

'When I got there I don't mind sayin' I was a bit put out to find it all shut up, an' after I'd knocked an' rung a bit an old fella sticks his kisser out of the winda next door an' tells me to move on an' not be disturbin' the neighbours. "Is this bell workin'?" says I, givin' another tug at the string. "It is not," says he. "An' even if it was, much good it would do you, for they're gone away out of that this t'ree weeks," says he. "Well," says I, "there must be some mistake," An' I got out me paper and I crossed off the Barracks an' I went on to Amiens Street.

'Well, there on the Howth platform, breaking open the slot machines, didn't I find a high officer in a uniform all complete, an' I thought to myself I'm right this time. "Come here," says he, when he saw me. "Have you ere a knife on you?" says he. "I have indeed," says I, gettin' out my slasher. "I have the whole boilin'," says I. "I'm ready for action." "Thanks," says he, twistin' back the lock with the blade. "Will you have a throat pastille or a jujube?"

'Well what with the throat pastilles an' all it wasn't long before we was as thick as thieves an' I was askin' him who he

was and all that. "Colonel Commandant Foley," says he. "I'm the Officer in charge of this district."

"Begob that's good," says I. "Because I've come to join your army."

"Ah, don't be a fool," says he. "Sure there's nothin' doin' here."

"There's enough for me," says I. "I'm not lookin' for trouble."

"Nor am I," says he. "An' that's why I'm not havin' any more of you gutties in my Brigade."

"Oh is that so?" says I sarcastic like. "Well let me tell ya there's no call for you to be so familiar with me. Isn't this an official recruitin' station?"

"If it is, it's the first I heard of it," says Foley. "So I got out me Call to Arms, an' I showed it to him. 'There,' says I. 'Now call me a liar.'"

'He was a bit shuk by that, an' I could see I had him down-faced. But even so he wouldn't falter. Oh, he was a hard nut was Foley.

"Well I tell you what," says he. "Come back again tomorrow an' I'll see what I can do for you."

"Oh yes," says I. "And find myself shut out. I know you."

"Well," says Foley, "that's the best I can do for you. An' it's my belief you're top-heavy with barley."

"Give me back me slasher," says I, "for I'll not come back again tomorrow. I'm going off to the City Hall," says I, "and when I've joined the Army, it's you I'm going to report to Headquarters Staff for insultin' behaviour an' misdemeanours in the conductin' of an official recruitin' station."

'An' with that I crossed Amiens Street Station off me list an' I left him in a lather of sweat wonderin' whether I meant what I said. And mind ya I did at the time, I was gettin' that nettled.

'So I went up to the City Hall then an' I had a goster with the sentry on duty. There was a bit o' pluggin' going on down in Dame Street at the time, I remember, but nobody was taking much notice of it, an' sure it was doing no harm anyways. But the sentry might as well have been Foley, though mind ya, lookin' back on it now I can see he meant well by me. If it hadn't been for the porter being out an' no one to lock up the place he'd have brought me somewheres himself. But it was Staff Captain Savage I'd have to see, he said and he was away at his tea. "Would you try the Café Belge," says he. "He often goes there of an afternoon."

"May your buck teeth choke ya," says I. "What do you take me for, going to the Café Belge, an' I leggin' it up the back stairs to glory?" An' I went down to Trinity College an' I waved me Call to Arms at the Guard and said, "Will ya tell me how the blazes ya get into this fiddlin' war?" But they only laughed in me face, an' sent me on to Beggarsbush. An' there

they didn't even come out to see me. A scrawny little fella looks out through the grille in the door and tells me to skip off outa that before they have me run in for trespassin'.

'Well, with that I knew I was bet. Mind ya I daresay I could still 'a' walked eight miles out to Howth and thried them there, but me spirit was broke an' I went round to try an' explain me difficulties to the O'Connor girl feelin' pretty low in meself. The motor bike was at the door sure enough an' there was me brave Doyle inside spreadin' himself worse than ever an' as pleased as Punch.

"Well," says he, "I'm off to-morra." I wouldn't give him the satisfaction of askin' him where, but I needn't 'a bothered for he went on just the same. "To the Curragh I'm goin', no less," says he. "To take up me official duties at Headquarters. I'm to be on parade at Wellington Barracks at eight o'clock in the mornin'," says he. "I suppose I won't see you there?"

'Ah, what with the fat laugh of him an' the smug airs he was puttin' on it was more than a man could stand, so I got up and come away before I sent him in his carcase box to Bully's Acre. It was goodbye to the O'Connor girl for Yours Truly, an' as I went out I heard him still gassin' away about himself, an' the whole family sittin' round respectful, hangin' on to the precious words of wisdom like they was at a Sodality.

"They were leppin' to have me," says Doyle. "They're mad to get specialists. There's many good enough to tote a gun, but when I told them about me medical knowledge they said I was just the fella they wanted. I'm to be some class of an Officer, an' it's straight to the Curragh they're drafting me."

My friend Bernie paused in his story, and a strange look came over his face.

'And so you lost the O'Connor girl?' I asked.

'Well I did and I didn't,' he continued. 'That wasn't quite the end of it. The next day me bold Specialist sets off for the wars an' the O'Connor girl an' the whole family out wavin' goodbye down the street. It was a brave sight. A thunderin' fine send off. An' he was to write every other day an' tell them all about the war. I don't mind sayin' I kep' out of sight when I saw him go. Yes, an' for some time afterwards, I felt bad about it all. Me only consolation was to get douched in malt.

'But not for long I'm glad to say. We heard nothin' for a while, but by an' by we used to get word from the fellas comin' back that Doyle was tryin' to get out o' the Army. It seems that he was some class of an Officer all right, thanks to all his great medical knowledge. Yes, says the boys, he's what they call a Sanitary Officer.

'Well, I won't go into what it was that Doyle was put to at the Curragh, except to say that for six weeks they kep' him at it until his mother managed to get into Government Buildings by the grace o' the parish priest an' a couple of T.D.'s an' got him home at last.

' Well, I laughed till the tears streamed down me face. " Take him," says I to the O'Connor girl. " An' if he comes out from this war with a medal," I says, " you'll know where to hang it," says I, for there was great bitterness in me heart, God forgive me. An' with that I left her, an' I haven't seen her from that day to this excep' maybe an odd time to nod to coming out o' Mass. Nor more she him either for the matter o' that, for that's the way with women, an' a man only trying to do what they asked him. As for meself I made up me mind then, an' God grant I never change it, that them that tries to show off by joining wars deserve all they get.'

A MAN HAS SOMETHING TO LOSE

THE EARLY MORNING CLINKING OF KETTLE AND PAN AWAKENED Frosty. For a time he was conscious only of sound and smell, the sound of the fire being raked, the milk cans rattling, scraping and jingling unfinished sounds, and the smell of bread frying. The purring, aeroplane noise of the milk Separator made him aware of time beating faster, faster, till the call came, first harsh, then pleading, "Jimmy, it's time for school. Jimmy, get up." His parents moved, muttered, about the kitchen. He did not think of himself as Jimmy or Frosty but, in moments of great pride as Collins, the boy-hero, like an eagle, flying, and, when something was found out, when he was defeated, as Collins, the wounded crow, buffeted down in the gale. This morning he was not anything that can be named, a breathing, warm boy only, waiting and hating to be called. Later he would spread his wings in time with the mood of the day and the movement of the sun. His people, proud of him, lived in the house by the river and achieved in their lifetime an untidy love story, bread and meat, and him, Frosty, their son. Frosty was at last getting up.

"Mr. Millar, Mr. Millar," the thin voice shrieked. "Mr. Millar, it's time to get up."

There was no reply. She waited a while, then, "Mr. Millar, it's half-eight. Your breakfast is on the table. It's time to get up, Mr. Millar."

"Umph." She went carefully down the stairs.

Since seven he had been listening to footsteps on the hollow stairs and her voice, "Mr. Burke . . . Mr. Lyons . . . Mr. Burke . . . It's time to get up. It's gone seven. It's time to get up," and the grumbling sounds the lodgers made, like animals awakened in their sleep, "Marnin', Mornin', Mournin', 'ello Mike, Yeaow, Yough." Like a zoo, and then a clear accent, "I was flustered last night," and the baby crying, far away on the other side of the house. The morning was not unusual. The sun came into his room, lighting up his scattered books and the spare cane that hung from the bed-rail. His trousers lay in a heap on the floor, the bottoms shiny and the wardrobe door swung half-open. He thought of himself as Mr. Millar, sour, kind, crackling dry, breaking his own heart in a blur of unidentifiable "sir . . . sir . . . sir . . . Yes boy . . . No boy . . . sir," his rusty spirit challenged now by the blue sky and the light coming into his room from the outside. Now it was not so much Mr. Millar, Crabtree, Crabby, as the battle for existence, the processing of enough courage to outlast another day. "I do not want to get up," he said to the sun. Then, because

the light angered him, because he thought that to be alone in the light was to be lonely, Mr. Millar dressed himself, repeated his prayers and went towards the dining-room.

Jerry Ingle was leaning his exercise book on a flat stone, saying, "Are you sure it's right? Are you sure it's right?"

"It's right, alright. My mother never goes wrong with these kinds of sums."

"It better be," Jerry Ingle said. "The last time I copied off you I got six. It better be right, Frosty Collins, or else—"

It was the tenth of May. Dermot Millar watched through his glasses the day idle itself away. He had no plans for the evening. There was nothing much worth doing. Any noise, any question would break the silence of the classroom. He watched the heads of the boys, seeing the daylight shining on tousled hair. Thinking . . . there's a book I have to read, a new book somebody said was good and I went and bought. A book to read, a pipe to smoke, a pint to drink. Where does it all end, though? Where is the meaning of anything, anything certain at all? They were doing sums now, their puny minds bent with figures, thinking of me as Crabby, a sour, fifty year old man, never doing them any good at all, hating me for being here, behind a cane, not a man but a cane, lifeless to them, an instrument of torture. I'll show them before the day is out who is master here. Collins smirking now, thinking I'm not looking, thinking like a rat in a hole that there is no enemy about, that his enemy is asleep. The priest . . . yes . . . the priest said . . . oh well. It was a forlorn day I ever came here, a cold black wet day I came with a bag down the main bloody street and in here, into the dust and the smell of their unwashed bodies. God, it's a long lonesome day ago.

"I bet I do something better than you to-day, Ingle," said Frosty.

"The North wind doth blow and we shall have snow

And what will the Robin do then, poor thing?"

said Millicent Galvin to the infants in the next room.

He remembered, suddenly, the Vincent de Paul collection outside the church on Sunday but it seemed, on contemplation, less troublesome, as everything he did was less troublesome since he came here than it ever had been. He liked Miss Galvin, liked her laugh and her shy, fussy ways. Miss Galvin thinking. A gateway, a golden door I want. To walk into the street one day I want and fall, surprised, into adventure, see a panel roll back and beyond, crystal fountains, blue hills, green seas. Crash went the blackboard in the next room.

Frosty Collins wrote on a piece of dirty paper "I fixed Miss Galvin's board this morning so it would fall, I done it so it would fall. Can you do as good as that, Ingle?"

Crash went the blackboard and splintered everything into silence, thin, tittering, shuffling, beginning to be self-conscious, silence. Frosty Collins felt like a golden eagle, a god-bird. Milli-

cent Galvin wanted to cry. "Now children. Be quiet, children." Dermot Millar glared at the tonsured head of the blacksmith's son, thinking. The boys screwed up their eyes so that the figures stared at them from the books, big and half alive.

"Who broke the two canes last week? Ingle. x his secret marke" wrote Ingle to Collins on a sweet wrapper.

Millicent Galvin was wondering if—if she would ever get married now, now that she was thirty, ever looking older in the cracked mirror in her room, if some day the mirror would open and she would walk through, beautiful.

The master thought hard, decision fluctuating, deciding. Collins was late for the serving again. So the priest said. Late all the time. Will you speak to him, Master, he said, I think you had better leave him off. There are plenty of boys from the town, he said, ready and willing to come in and not having old Tom Jackson to come up and serve from the body of the church. Besides it doesn't look well for the school, he said. So the priest said.

It was all over, the angry outburst, the stuttered reply, the dismissal. Frosty sat quiet in his seat, vacant, staring into space at the insult of it, the disgrace, removed a little from the others, orphaned suddenly, defeated. They were not thinking of Frosty at all, not caring one way or the other, but glad only that the tension was over, because strain was unnatural, involved everybody, guilty and innocent. There was a kind of cleansing when it was over.

"So you fixed the blackboard, did you?" asked Ingle as they went towards the playground in the break. "You fixed the blackboard," said Ingle. "You . . . you . . . cowardly . . . sneaking spoilt priest."

"I did and I'd do more. I'd do anything. I'll kill him, the . . . the . . . the . . . bastard. And I will, I will."

"Kill him would you? You wouldn't do anything worth doing. Go on. Steal one of his letters. Steal one of those letters. That will get your revenge."

"Frosty is it?" said a boy. "Frosty is a coward, a yellow coward."

Frosty picked a random letter before the master collected the post, going away saying, "There Ingle. And I'll do more than that. I'll kill Crabby, the swine." "Tig," said a fat boy. "You're tig, Frosty," and they all scattered away from him, running through the yard, shouting, "Catch me, Frosty. Catch me, Frosty. Frosty, the Rosty, the rick-stick Frosty."

"They're happy, Dermot," said Millicent looking through the window into the playground. "The young are happy." "Perhaps," he replied. "Perhaps."

"Fed-up? Me too. You knew, Dermot. I don't know how we stick it. The same routine, day in, day out, the same dirty faces, the same stupid questions. I feel as if I want to give it all up, to go away, start off in some new place, see some life. The

hills are not very green here," looking at the hard, uneven ground outside the town.

"There's nothing much else to do," he replied, wondering why he so often attracted the unhappy side of people. Thinking, she's not too bad and I'm sure she'd have me if I asked her. There's nothing much to lose, some comfort to gain. Other wilder women had remained ghosts in his dreams until not so long ago but the past was a dead time, a twisted, hard time.

"I have you," said Frosty. "You're tig, Ingle. I got you."

"What do you do in the evenings?"

"Oh, nothing exciting, Dermot, knit . . . read . . . fix the flowers on the altar. I'm going to a dance to-night, though. Got a friend coming down. Why don't you drop into the hall for an hour or so? I'm sure you were a gay boy when you were younger" He called the boys in from play.

"I'll give you five bob for the watch, Frosty. Honest, I'll bring it in on Monday. I'll get it off my uncle for new books. He'd give me anything, Frosty."

"I'm not selling. I'm not selling it. It's my watch. No. No. No."

"C-a-t," went on the chanting voices in the next room. "C-a-t, cat. M-a-t, mat." "For Monday," said Miss Galvin, "these words."

The sums will keep them busy till three, thought Millar, and then I shall be free till Monday.

How will I tell my mother about the serving? The shame of it.

Old Crabby's bullying to-day. It's hard luck on Frosty, thought Ingle.

The wind caught the calendar, sending future vacant months across the wall. The master was locking the preses, putting the roll-book, cane and desk-calendar away. "Amen," he ended, wondering how many masters said prayers at the end of the day. They moved off, their voices gathering momentum the farther they were away from the schoolroom, until only one remained.

"Please sir, my mummy said . . ."

"Right," he said. "I'll look into it on Monday. I'm busy now."

"Good evening sir."

"Good evening."

The last footsteps died to silence, gradually.

A schoolhouse is full of silence when the children and teachers are gone. The silence grows and grows with the passing of time until the whispering echoes of chatter and laughter noiselessly weave themselves into the air of the empty building. The mat and the fireplace, the horses and dogs on the walls, and even the

frayed map of the world seem to go to sleep at half-past three until the boys come back again. Alone, in the chalky air Dermot remained. The calendar fluttered again. November . . . December . . . rain . . . frost . . . rain. The sky was without clouds. If only a friend would write. Friends were dead images to him, granite figures that had on some day or year he was not too sure about, stopped growing. Suddenly he shivered, a ghost walking on his grave. Out, then, into the playground he went, hurrying somewhat, out beyond the lawn, through the iron gate, on to the road.

"It's a disgrace. That's what it is. I suppose he'll get away with it too."

"Aye," said Mrs. Dillon. "The likes of him gets away with anything. But if it was a decent person—Here's your boy. Isn't he growing?"

"Jimmy? He eats enough anyway. He'll be wanting his dinner now."

"I'll be pushing off. I only came over to tell you, to warn you to send no money through the post," laughing, gathering her red petticoat over the stile.

"What's that about letters, Mammy? Did we lose letters?"

"Nothing for your ears. Get your dinner down now and go out and help your father with the turnips."

"What happened to the letters, Mammy? Did somebody steal letters?"

"Only Mick, the temporary man, was arrested for taking money out of a letter."

"What will happen to him?"

"Jail, I suppose an' it's what he deserves—but look here I have more to do than stand answering your questions. Get on with your dinner."

It didn't seem so long ago since he was a boy like Collins and was put off the altar for being late. That was a sour memory. It was a smaller, poorer church than this, with an old, dark interior. He had been proud of his white and black vestments, child-priest, then sorry because he could wear his vestments no more. They lay in an old trunk and he never thought of them because he did not like them. They were no longer part of him. They were put away in the back of his mind like his first dance and girls' names, other unsuccessful things. The road was empty. A girl's name. The pride of having a girl. The loss of a girl. Suddenly he shuffled awkwardly into waitz time in the middle of the road. The tune he had heard a boy singing. A brown woman came into view at the chapel corner and his feet stopped, though the tune continued, elated, under his lips. "*Mexicale Rose, don't leave me. Mexicale Rose, goodbye.*"

"Good evening, Master."

"Good evening, Mrs. Tate."

He wondered how he could get away quick enough, get away

out before the letter burned a hole in his pocket. Outside the cart was rumbling through the yard, carrying manure to the turnips. Until his father had gone he crouched by the gable, the smell of manure in his nose, his mind like a maze, like a web. Decisions were made and re-made, each followed by a private horror. Now it was the outlaw, straggling in shaggy glens, Collins the hunted and the unbrave. Now it was being nothing at all, being part of something he didn't want at all and a vast depth closing in. He wanted to go to school, to go to a foreign country, keeping away in the fields from people, not sure that this was happening to him at all, saying, "Why did it have to happen to me?" When he crept back at six there was no policeman in the yard and no car, only the cows ambling into the milking and the house as quiet as death. No one looked up when he entered. "Who's that?" called his mother from the next room. "Only me. Only me."

The dancers glided beneath the oil burners. The bunting remained a memorial to some ambitious person. Along the walls ranged the sexually or temporally reject males talking in artificial voices, some with their overcoats on. The band blared from the stage, from behind its shamrock symbol and initials G.R. and, on the far side of the hall sat the uglier or older women. In the centre the sweating mass swerved and looped, little men with tall girls, fat men with thin girls, slim men with slim girls. Outside the windows the schoolboys and one or two men who thought two-and-six too much for the risk of a girl's arms round them bandied phrases through the broken panes with the excellent fortunate. Life went on.

"Look, Ingle. I've got to put it back," Frosty said, "or I'll be arrested. Maybe there's money in it—it's a foreign stamp. And it's all your fault."

"It's nothing to do with me, Frosty. You stole it. Drop it in the river or on the road. But it's nothing to do with me. Don't bring me into it."

"I'll bring it back and say I found it," thought Frosty, going away, not too sure, thinking how swiftly flowed the river.

Carefully, wishing to be unnoticed, Millar moved through the throng. Eyes seemed to swallow him up, eyes of those he had taught, had caned, eyes full of little malicious contempt. Girls nodded to their partners when he passed and their partners ceased from dancing too close.

"Look who's here," whispered the drummer in an interval, "the Master, over there on the right. Now I wonder what he's doing here."

When he went to the river a fisherman saw him. "'ello, Sonny," he said. "Are you fond of fishing?"

"No," said Frosty. "No."

"This is my friend, Joan Deely, Dermot," Millicent said. "You two dance. I must help with the tea."

"I dance very badly," he began. "Very badly."

The band began again and the floor filled.

"Is Mr. Millar in please?"

"No, he's not in. Why? Does somebody want him?"

"No. Only me. I—I—Well—"

"He's not in anyway," she said, wondering if her child was crying in the back room.

"Alright. It's alright."

He walked up and down the road, frightened of everyone who passed till darkness fell.

At the bottom of the field behind the hall was a river.

"The stars are up and falling to-night," he said, wondering—How am I to begin at all? "Wish on that star."

"That's beautiful," clutching his arm.

This is my last great moment, he thought—How am I to enjoy it to the full, how am I going to keep the touch of her arm?

"At last," said Frosty, numbed, seeing the girl, hiding. "Too late."

"And the river is so peaceful at night and the little broken sighs it gives, babbling away there to itself."

"The river goes on and on and we don't always notice its wise secret ways. And, look, there's another star, Joan, over there."

Their faces touched.

"We are so small and alone and the universe is so big."

The strains of the music crept in to the sounds of the river, Frosty moved in the weeds. "He's seen me," said Frosty.

"Collins has seen me," said Millar.

"Sir," eagerly.

Only a finger pointing, sent the boy away.

They went back to the hall.

"You've got a right one there, Master," a voice outside the window said.

Oh God, oh God oh God, thought he, watching his universe blown up. The faces loomed up again, up before his eyes, curious, mocking, young. If she was less beautiful I'd be braver. To-morrow I'll be braver. To-morrow was Saturday. And the next day was collection day and mass-serving day and every day.

"It's being nice knowing you," she said, changing partners.

Christ, did nothing matter? Had she forgotten already? The walk by the river, was it so unimportant? Was there nothing, nothing sure?

"It's no use. No one to dance me. My day is over." The mirror, push as she would, did not open for Millicent. Tired, old neglected, she turned out cup after cup of tea, saying "Sugar . . . Cake? . . . Sugar? . . ."

Up the road went Mr. Millar home, and in the darkness, crouching in the darkness, followed the boy. Somehow or other it seemed too late now. There was some reason why it was too late now. But he did not know anything except that he did not own all himself, that the bird flying had picked up something from outside himself. The world had expanded into millions of people and he was trying to jostle a way out of the darkness to himself. In a dark corner he had seen no money in the envelope, only words. *You, too, can take a proud place . . . among the world's successes . . . at little expense . . . now.* He did not know what this meant at all, whether it was important or not. Even the stamp was only an English one. Then, before he knew whether to take the stamp away or not the match gave out. Quickly, solemnly, quietly, he put the letter under a great stone. Footsteps moved him home.

"I'll ask Millicent to-morrow," said Mr. Millar. "There's few else would have me now."

"How will I tell my mother about the serving?" said Collins. "I'll have to tell her to-morrow."

Footsteps echoed through the lodging-house. Voices. "Night Fred. Night, Tom. I'm flustered, Tom."

Frosty went to sleep among sounds of the fire being raked and half noises, of kettles and pans being moved, and the sound of dark night coming over him, like a great flat stone.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

ADAM AND EVE

In an unlocated garden
Our First Parents used to roam
While a most assertive warden
Ran their happy, houseless home.
They had vegetarian menus,
Nothing then was poisonous,
No one thought of cooking sinews,
For they hadn't got a house ;
And they wore not even sporrans,
For they hadn't got a kilt;
Our First Parents lived like morons,
Or like nudists, in their pelt ;
Never answered a reveille,
They could always take their ease ;
They were happy as two jelly
Fishes floating in warm seas.
Happiness might have been boring
Had they not been kept in awe
By a cross 'twixt Hermann Goering
And falutin' Bernard Shaw
"On one tree is one restriction
(No ; it's not the prickly pear)
If you do not seek eviction
You must leave the apple there.
It is called 'The Tree of Knowledge' ;
If you taste it, out you go ;
And your kids must go to college
Where the racket is, to know."

All went well till, over-idle
Eve, who hadn't much to do,
One day left the path to sidle
In the forest out of view,
Where she said, "I think a nap'll
Hardly fail to do me good ;"
So she dozed beneath the apple
In the centre of the wood.
Coiled about its bole and branches
Was an elongated thing ;
Though it hadn't any haunches,
Yet it had an awful sting ;
Its divided tongue was double
As its meaning when it spoke :

Words can cause a lot of trouble ;
 Words were then the Devil's joke.
 Fourteen coils its length attested ;
Spironema pallidum
 Never Man so much molested
 As that snake-head pendulum.
 "Eve," it said. The poor fool listened—
 Oh, the Serpent was astute,
 And its coils with pleasure glistened
 When its words were bearing fruit:
 "Everything within the Garden
 Is lovely, lovely. Only you
 Are unconscious that you starred in
 God's great movie ; yes, you two.
 Now I feel it is my duty
 To point out your loveliness :
 You will not perceive your beauty
 Till you take a bite of this.
 You are like the apple blossom
 Pink and white ; there's no alarm—
 Take your hand from off your bosom—
 Pink and white can't do you harm."
 And it pointed out the pippin ;
 Eve reached for it and did eat.
 Adam found her gently nippin'
 "Here," she said, "it's very sweet."

Wham! The welkin roared in anger ;
 And the Voice of God was heard
 High above the awful clangour,
 "Ye have disobeyed my Word.
 Get ye gone! Get out of Eden ;
 Never hope to come therein."
 Eve went out with Adam leadin',
 Though she led him into sin.
 Yes ; the welkin roared damnation
 With the anger of the Lord ;
 And an angel took his station
 By the Gate with flaming sword.
 By the Voice exasperated—
 This is roughly what it said—
 Adam was the first berated :
 "In your brow's sweat earn your bread."
 Then to Eve . . . I've no intention
 Of repeating what it spoke
 Save to say it did not mention
 Anything to ease her yoke :
 Quite sadistic and frenetic,
 For it mentioned no such thing
 As a caudal anaesthetic
 To relieve her child-bearing.

Adam thought, "This can but serve her
Right who ate forbidden fruit."
Angel held his *flammen werfer*
Mockingly at the salute.

"Well, that's that!" said Eve to Adam.
"Now since we are on our own,
Don't you dare to call me 'Madam'
Till we're married. Put this on."
And she handed him a fig-leaf
Which he donned; and one presumes
For herself she kept a big leaf
All bedecked with peacock plumes.

Now the angel with the flaming
Sword who stood beside the Gate
Finding Adam not worth blaming,
Dropped his weapon from the straight
Pointing earthward, where it roasted
One fat Paradisal duck;
Yes, it roasted and it toasted,
For the bird was out of luck.
Eve dived for it. Oh, she hastened
To retrieve the roasted bird
For she now was strictly rationed
By the edict of the Lord.
Adam smelt it; he was fasting
Since they Eden both forsook;
And the bird was well worth tasting
For an angel was the cook.
But he could not be too hasty,
Sprinting he could not achieve,
Since his mild thoracoplasty
Suffered at the birth of Eve.
Oh, they did enjoy that dinner,
Though they hadn't got a plate,
It was such a welcome winner
O'er their vegetable state.
Anything it lacked in flavour
Passed unnoticed for, of course,
Diplomatic Adam never,
Never mentioned apple sauce.
From that day he called her 'Duckie',
"Duckie, kindly pass the duck."
Later on, he thought her lucky
When to motherhood she took;
And she bore a pair of sprightly
Boys; but on the brow of Cain
Grew a mark that looked unsightly,
For he did his brother in.

This is how the sad thing happened:
 Cain, the elder of the two,
 Could not take a wordy rap, and
 Abel with a spade he slew.
 Abe had said, "Cain, stop your struttin';
 And don't think because you've had
 Since your birth, a belly-button,
 You're a better man than Dad."

This, I hoped, were all a fable,
 For, with much reluctance, I
 Wondered oft how Cain was able
 To increase and multiply.
 Maybe, Adam's first wife, Lilith,
 His step-mother, was his mate.
 (The mills of God are, when God willeth,
 Disinclined to festinate.)
 If old Freud to-day were living
 Who was so obsessed with sex,
 He would point without misgiving,
 To an Œdipus complex.
 Incest, murder, disobedience,
 To the dictates of his God,
 These are all Mankind's ingredients,
 Can you wonder we are odd?

Ask me not for a solution
 Of this parable of Eve.
 Perhaps, it means that Evolution
 Starts when man begins to grieve;
 Perhaps it means iconoclasm—
 Putting Dresden after delph:
 Eve is Adam's ectoplasm,
 Blaming her, he blames himself.
 Maybe Eden Eton is
 And this strange truth doth symbolise:
 To wit: "Where ignorance is bliss
 'Tis folly to be wise."

FRANCIS RUSSELL

FINLEY PETER DUNNE AND MR. DOOLEY

WHEN FINLEY PETER DUNNE, THE CREATOR OF MR. DOOLEY, DIED IN 1936 in his seventieth year, the surprising thing to those who remembered his writings was that he had lived on into the era of the second Roosevelt. Somehow one took it for granted that he had been dead a quarter of a century. He seemed so much a part of that boisterous American interlude between the Spanish War and 1914, that he could survive it only as an anachronism. The Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Dooley essays form an inseparable association. That war gave Dunne, the young newspaper man, an overnight fame; Roosevelt—his most famous essay was on the Rough Rider—gave him substance. Beyond this decade he did not develop. Although a final book of his was published after World War I, the catastrophe was not reflected in its pages.

During the course of his life Dunne wrote some seven hundred Dooley essays in which he assumed the *alter ego* of Martin Dooley (born in Roscommon in the year of Victoria's ascension), a saloon-keeper in an Irish immigrant section of Chicago. Mr. Dooley, in these essays of anywhere from eight hundred to two thousand words, commented weekly from behind the bar of his Archey Road saloon on the life, customs, events local and otherwise, politics and personalities of the United States in its confident expansion at the turn of the century. The superficial effect was humorous. Yet veiled by this genial brogue with its wry exaggerations and twists of humour was a cold and analytical mind, as sharp in criticism and often as bitter as has appeared on the American scene. What Mr. Dooley said so casually in dialect neither Finley Peter Dunne nor anyone else could have said in conventional English.

A biographer writing shortly after Dunne's death maintained that Mr. Dooley took his place in the history of American humour through the line of Simon Suggs, Major Jack Downing, Hosea Biglow, Petroleum V. Nasby, Bill Arp, Artemus Ward and Josh Billings. He might with greater accuracy have added Dunne's friend Mark Twain. For Dunne has something of Twain's still living reality, whereas the others will scarcely be read again except by specialists. As William Dean Howells wrote long ago and Mr. Thornton Wilder stated again in a recent Norton Lecture at Harvard, Dunne is in the great tradition of American humorists.

Yet although Dunne's place in the tradition is assured, nevertheless he stands apart from it. American humour of his generation and before was connected with the frontier for the most part. It was bumptious, rural, nationalistic, and depended for much of its effect on distortions of language. Mr. Dooley is American by

adoption, urban, and with his deepest roots across the Atlantic. His speech is a transcription of an Irish dialect in which, as Dunne wrote in his preface to the first Dooley volume, "one can hear all the various accents of Ireland from the awkward brogue of the 'far-downer' to the mild and aisy Elizabethan English of the southern Irishman, and all the exquisite variations to be heard between Armagh and Bantry Bay, with the difference that would naturally arise from substituting cinders and sulphuretted hydrogen for soft misty air and peat smoke." His is an 18th century mind, occasionally swept by savage indignation, but lacking the subsequent belief in progress and perfectibility. Dunne, with his race memories of Ireland, cursed the misery of the Chicago slums. He hated the naked abuse of political power. In another age he might have collaborated on the Drapier Letters. Yet though he looked for pragmatic reforms he did not believe in reformers. At heart he was a tory. In religion he remained what Santayana called a free-thinking Catholic, content to live and die within the tradition of the Church without however accepting it personally.

Dunne's first book, *Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War*, appeared just half a century after the Famine. For fifty years the brutalized illiterate Irish masses had been swarming to the United States where they for the most part lived briefly, worked ignominiously and died. The average life-span of the Irish labourer coming to America in the 'fifties was twelve years. During the second year of the Civil War, Irish immigrants starved in the alleys of the seaboard cities. The poor Paddies were considered no more than a reservoir of cheap labour. They were the hod-carriers, the ditch-diggers, the slag-shovellers. They built the railways and died like flies along the Erie Canal. Gradually through the field of local politics they began to assert themselves. And in Mr. Dooley the mass Celt in America for the first time became articulate. Being Celtic the voice was full of irony.

The Dooley books were a phenomenal success, a triumph. Yet the triumph was limited to scarcely more than a decade. Even as Dunne wrote his essays, that "aisy" dialect was being superseded by the flat Irish-American accent of the second generation. The image of the Irish labourer shouldering his pick or on the way to the rolling mill was no longer characteristic. Irish immigrants were changing their status, moving up into the middle class as their places were taken by new waves of immigrants from other lands, becoming politicians and on their way to becoming in a later generation ambassadors, cabinet ministers and candidates for president.

With the emergence of the generation of the native-born from among the immigrant groups, dialect humour fell out of favour. The Irish brogue declined, and as it vanished from the old Celtic pales of the larger cities, younger readers found the Dooley essays difficult. Mr. Dooley went out of fashion. He is remembered today chiefly by those of late middle-age. For anyone who has grown up since 1914 his language is a handicap. Yet it is certain that as Dunne's era falls into perspective people will turn to his

Dooley essays again, for their wisdom, for their historical intimacy, for the feeling of urban immigrant America as it was at the beginning of this century—and they will find that they read him with delight. When one takes down those faded green books embossed with gilt harps and shamrocks, the racy gusto is still there. As in a volume of Max Beerbohm's early caricatures one now often fails to identify the actual persons involved, but the bold and telling strokes are as fresh as ever.

Dunne was born in Chicago in 1867 of respectable lower-middle-class Irish parents. His family lived within the Irish pale not too far from Archer Avenue—the Archey Road of the Dooley essays—and Dunne's childhood was spent for the most part in parochial association with the poor Irish labourers and their families who formed the bulk of the neighbourhood. He graduated from high school—a proof of his family's middle-class status—and at the age of seventeen went to work as an office boy for the *Telegram*, the poorest of Chicago's journals. Before long he began to do police reporting, and it was evident to more than one editor that he had a flair for newspaper work. He moved on to the superior *News* and among his other assignments became one of the first sports writers in the United States. Even in sports writing and at the age of twenty his satirical-humorous turn of mind began to show itself. Before long he was offered a place on the *Times* to do political reporting, and carried this out so successfully that in a short while and at the age of twenty-one he was made city editor. When the *Times* was reorganised he left for a while to become a reporter again, but reporting did not appeal to him greatly and he was relieved when he had a chance to go on to the *Herald* and its subsidiary the *Evening Post* where he could again write political news.

The Chicago of that period was as corrupt and boss-ridden a city as one could find in the United States. To its sordid political life Dunne applied his satirical gifts with wit, malice, and a surprising sophistication for his age and background. He became one of a group of politically-radical iconoclastic young men who formed the spirited and somewhat bizarre Whitechapel Club. It was at this time he began tentatively to experiment with Irish dialect.

He found the dialect a medium for expressing certain things that could not be said outright in Chicago at the time. In an introduction to a selection of his essays, written a few months before his death, Dunne relates that as a young reform journalist he realized that it might be dangerous to call a politician a thief, but no one could object if a comic Irishman called him one. "If I had written the same thing in English," he wrote, "I would inevitably have been pistolled or slugged, as other critics were. But my victims did not complain. They felt bound to smile and treat these highly libellous articles as mere humorous skits."

Mr. Dooley's beginnings were casual, almost accidental. There was a dignified and voluble Irishman by the name of McGarry who kept a large publichouse near the *Chicago Tribune*, much

frequented by newspaper men. Dunne, as an occasional visitor, happened to be there the afternoon of Jay Gould's death and was so amused by McGarry's remarks on the financial buccaneer, that he wrote them up as a short piece for the *Sunday Post*, attributing them to a Colonel McNeery. Dunne soon realised the possibilities of this type of essay. What he did not realize was that McGarry might object to his caricature. When after some months he did object, Dunne altered the milieu of his pieces to the Archey Road saloon "forninst th' gas-house and beyant Healey's slough and not too far from the polis station" where his great character Martin Dooley appeared for the first time.* A minor character, John McKenna, the small-time politician who was the foil to McNeery, was transplanted to Mr. Dooley's establishment, to be superseded in later years by the ingenuous Hennessy.

During the whole of Dunne's newspaper career the Dooley essays were a side-line, a small once-a-week interlude from his daily editorial tasks. Yet what began as a light aside gradually developed a deeper vein, almost as if Dunne himself were unaware of what he was doing. Mr. Dooley was always amusing, but underneath the comic manner the social criticism became sharper and more inclusive. At times in these unsigned pieces humour gave way completely to bitter anger. One of the Dooley incidents that Dunne remembered with most satisfaction in later life concerned the Pullman strike in the depression of 1894. When this strike against the Pullman Car Company was finally broken by Federal troops, there was destitution and actual hunger in the village of Pullman. Dunne, who had attacked Pullman before, now went for him savagely in a short piece *What Does He Care?* that is one of the surest examples of the early essays, although because of its bitterness he did not include it in his later books.

"Jawn," said Mr. Dooley, "I said it wanst an' I say it again, I'd liefer be George M. Pullman thin anny man this side iv Michigan City. I wud so. Not, Jawn, d'ye mind that I invy him his job iv runnin' all th' push-cart lodgin-houses iv th' counthry or in dayvilopin' th' whiskers iv a goat without displayin' anny other iv th' good qualities iv th' craythur or in savin' his taxlist fr'm th' assisor with th' intintion iv layin' it before a mathrimonyal agency. Sare a bit does I care f'r thim honors. But, Jawn, th' lad that can go his way with his nose in th' air an' pay no attintion to th' sufferin' iv women an' childher—dear, oh, dear, but his life must be as happy as th' day is long.

"It seems to me, Jawn, that half th' throuble we have in this vale iv tears, as Dohenny calls Bridgepoort, is seein' th' sufferin' iv women an' little childhern . . .

"But as I said, Jawn, 'tis not th' min ye mind; 'tis th' women an' childhern. Glory be to Gawd, I can scarce go out f'r a walk f'r pity at seein' th' little wans settin' on th' stoops an' th' women with thim lines in th' face that I seen but wanst before, an' that in our parish over beyant, whin th' potatoes was all kilt be th' frost an' th' oats rotted with th' dhrivin' rain. Go into wan iv th' side

sthreets about supper time an' see thim, Jawn—thim women sittin' at th' windies, with th' babies at their breasts an' waitin' f'r th' ol' man to come home. Thin watch him as he comes up th' sthreet, with his hat over his eyes an' th' shoulders iv him bint-like a hoop an' dhraggin' his feet as if he carried ball an' chain. Musha, but 'tis a sound to dhrive ye're heart cold whin a woman sobs an' th' young wans cries, an' both because there's no bread in th' house. Betther off thim that lies in Gavin's crates out in Calv'ry, with th' grass over thim an' th' stars lookin' down on thim, quite at last. An' betther f'r us that sees an' hears an' can do nawthin' but give a crust now an' thin . . .

Mr. Dooley swabbed the bar in a melancholy manner and turned again with the remark: "But what's it all to Pullman? Whin Gawd quarried his heart a happy man was made. He cares no more f'r thim little matthers iv life an' death thin I do f'r O'Connor's tab. 'Th' women an' childhern is dyin' iv hunger,' they says. 'Will ye not put out ye'er hand to help thim?' they says. 'Ah, what th' 'ell,' says George. 'What th' 'ell,' he says. 'James,' he says, 'a bottle iv champagne an' a piece iv crambree pie. What th' 'ell, what th' 'ell, what th' 'ell.'

"I heard two died yesterday," said Mr. McKenna. "Two women."

"Poor things, poor things. But," said Mr. Dooley, once more swabbing the bar, "what th' 'ell."

After the typesetter had run off the proof, instead of sending it back he passed it around the composing room. Shortly afterward as Dunne appeared, the typesetters in a unique and spontaneous tribute to him commenced drumming their sticks on their cases in applause. The essay was read and recited all over Chicago. Dunne had made his mark in the city.

It was the Spanish-American War however that made Mr. Dooley a national figure and brought Dunne fame overnight. Those essays on the course and motives of the war, on governmental inefficiency, red tape, national bombast, and the faults and foibles of the military, are still ludicrously funny today when the incidents and leaders are forgotten. No one remembers General Miles and General Shafter, but their weaknesses, through Mr. Dooley's eyes, have become the weaknesses of brass-hat authority everywhere. Dunne always had the ability to puncture pretension with a rapier phrase. Congressmen might talk about expansion and manifest destiny, but Mr. Dooley had the last word: "Take up th' white man's burden an' hand it to th' coons." Of the occupation of the Philippines Dunne wrote: "Whin we plant what Hogan calls th' starry banner iv Freedom in th' Ph'lipeens," said Mr. Dooley, "an' give th' sacrid blessin' iv liberty to th' poor, down-trodden people iv thim unfortunate isles,—dam thim!—we'll larn thim a lesson. . . . 'Naygurs,' says we, 'ye mis'erable, childish-minded apes, we propose f'r to larn ye th' uses iv liberty. In ivry city in this unfair land we will erect school-houses an' packin'-houses an' houses iv correction; an' we'll larn ye our language,

because 'tis asier to larn ye ours than to larn oursilves yours. An' we'll give ye clothes, if ye pay f'r thim; an' if ye don't ye can go without. . . ."

Dunne was at his most hilarious, and caused the most attention nationally with his pieces on Admiral Dewey and the destruction of the Spanish fleet. As he explained it in his old age, "it was not until the war with Spain was declared that Dooley gained what was, to the author more than anyone else, an amazing popularity. I have always attributed this to the possibility that the articles reflected the feeling of the public about this queer war. It was a feeling made up of contempt for the foe with quite a distinct apprehension that perhaps our fighting establishment was as stupid as our politicians and as unprepared for war."

Although Eugene Field had earlier urged Dunne to print a selection of the Dooley essays it was not until the time of their nation-wide popularity when Dunne received numbers of requests for permission to reprint them that he was finally persuaded to publish a representative group. *Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War*, a book of forty-nine essays and a preface about the Archey Road signed only with the initials F.P.D., was the literary sensation of 1898. It went through six editions in eight months and was pirated in three separate editions in England. Everyone was quoting Mr. Dooley on subjects ranging from imperialism to golf, the new woman, and the Dreyfus Case. At the age of thirty-one Dunne had become a celebrity. Instead of the ten extra dollars that he once received for his weekly Dooley pieces he now realized large sums from their syndication. A year after the appearance of his first book he published *Mr. Dooley in the Hearts of his Countrymen*, a volume made up for the most part of essays that had originally appeared in the *Post*. Though lacking the novelty of the first one it was still extraordinarily successful and the reviews were even more favourable.

Just before the publication of his second book Dunne went to England where he was welcomed almost as warmly as he had been in America. On his return he resumed his editorial position for some months, but Chicago and newspaper work there now seemed a limiting and limited field. The Dooley articles had made him financially independent, and he decided to go on to New York and devote himself to literature. Although the syndicated weekly articles would support him Dunne never considered these dialect essays a really permanent literary form. He wanted to write a straight novel, perhaps the Great American Novel long dreamed about by so many.

In leaving Chicago he left his early environment behind him, figuratively as well as literally. His later books expanded beyond the intimacy of that Irish slum by the stockyards. Mr. Dooley would continue to speak from behind his bar with the same cutting humour and the same ability to expose a situation or deflate an individual in an off-hand sentence that had the power of a concealed time-bomb, but he would speak of national and international events now. Instead of Gavin and his crates or some dead

"Connock" man, the articles turned either political or dealt with general subjects such as Christian Science, Wall Street, Thanksgiving, Newport, the Paris Exposition, and so on. Dunne was read by millions, he became a power in the land, discussed at presidential cabinet meetings and feared by politicians, yet the simple humanity and the sub-surface tragedy of the Archey Road were lost.

During the next three years Dunne published three more Dooley books. It was the period of his greatest influence. In retrospect he seems part of the events he wrote about. When Theodore Roosevelt's naively egotistical book on his military exploits in Cuba appeared it was Mr. Dooley who took the Rough Rider's measure.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Dooley, "I jus' got hold iv a book, Hinnissy, that suits me up to th' handle, a gran' book, the' grandest iver seen. . . ."

"What is it?" Mr. Hennessey asked languidly.

"Tis 'Th' Biography iv a Hero be Wan who Knows.' 'Tis 'Th' Darin' Exploits iv a Brave Man be an Actual Eye Witness.' 'Tis 'Th' Account iv th' Desthruction iv Spanish Power in th' Ant Hills', as it fell fr'm th' lips iv Tiddy Rosenfelt an' was took down be his own hands. . . ."

"I think Tiddy Rosenfelt is all r-right," said Mr. Hennessey, "an' if he want to blow his hor-rn lave him do it."

"Thru'e f'r ye," said Mr. Dooley, "an' if his valiant deeds didn't get into this book 'twud be a long time before they appeared in Shafter's histhry iv th' war. . . . An' if Tiddy done it all he ought to say so an' relieve th' suspinse. But if I was him I'd call th' book 'Alone in Cubia.'"

Mr. Dooley's observation that "th' supreme coort follows th' iliction returns" is still current in conventional English, used by many unconscious of its origin. When Dunne wrote of the coal strike of 1902 his indignation flared up in an essay that had overtones of *A Modest Proposal*.

"It'll be a hard winther if we don't get coal," said Mr. Hennessey.

"What d'ye want with coal?" said Mr. Dooley. "Ye'er a most unraisonable man. D'ye think ye can have all th' comforts iv life an' that ye mus' make no sacryfice to uphold th' rights iv property? Ivrybody will have plinty iv fuel this winther. Th' rich can burn with indignation, thinkin' iv th' wrongs inflicted on capital, th' middle or middlin' class will be marchin' with th' milishy, an' th' poor can fight among themselves an' burn th' babies. I niver thought iv babies before as combustible, but they are. At wan stroke ye can keep th' baby warrum an' th' rest iv th' fam'ly comfortable. Before th' winther is over I expict to hear ye callin': 'Packy, go out to th' woodshed an' bring in a scuttleful iv little Robert Immit. Th' fire is burnin' low.' They'll be nawthin' else to burn. . . ."

There was an exuberant and an apparently inexhaustible

vitality to Dunne's mind that could range at large over current phenomena and suddenly reveal the heart of the matter in a single luminous paragraph. With "Alone in Cubia" he drew all the conclusions about Roosevelt's vanity in three words. He could do the same for any number of people from Senator Beveridge's oratory ("Ye could waltz to it.") to the Emperor of Germany going to his bedroom "f'r to wurruck on th' book he's goin' to br-ring out nex' year to take th' place iv th' bible." His definition of a fanatic was final: "A man that does what he thinks th' Lord wud do if He knew th' facts iv the case." And there was always his never-failing fun, as when he maintained that "all expositions is a blind f'r th' hootchy-kootchy dance." The pages of the Dooley books are strewn with such pungent aphorisms.

Yet contrary to the impression given by these essays Dunne was not an easy writer, and as time went on he found increasing difficulties with his work. The freedom from newspaper routine that he had come to New York to find did not give him the enlarged creative capacity he had hoped for. His writing outside of dialect consisted for the most part of spasmodic editorial work for magazines. There were times when he dropped Mr. Dooley altogether. Then after a gap of months he would resume a new Dooley series and arrange for syndicate publication. Before long however he would find his inspiration flagging, he would begin to miss his commitments and finally he would cancel the series unfinished.

Instead of his five annual volumes it was three years until his next book was published, then five more years elapsed before *Mr. Dooleys Says* appeared in 1910. There was no falling off in the quality of this last but it was no longer apt as the others had been. For the first time a Dooley book aroused no public response. Mr. Dooley had begun to date. The Roosevelt Square Deal was over, and Dunne was no longer the contemporary spokesman and wit that he had been ten years before.

His literary output trickled away. Now his social life became increasingly an alternative to his creative life. After his marriage in 1902 he had assimilated easily into the social world of New York. He knew almost everyone of prominence, from literary figures like Mark Twain to financiers and presidents. Most of the year he lived in the city, spending his summer on Long Island and making occasional winter trips to Palm Beach and Aiken, South Carolina. He was a member of many clubs, and as the years went by found more and more satisfaction in the convivialities of club life.

Just after the war he gathered together a small number of fugitive Dooley pieces, added to them here and there, and published *Mr. Dooley on Making a Will*. It was the last Dooley book to appear in his life-time. Although parts of it were written during World War I it scarcely reflects the war at all. And for the first time it shows a definite decline, even though there are essays in it where the old irrepressible wit still bursts through. Dunne's inspiration might slip but he could never, at least in dialect, be a bad writer. Yet through these pages one senses the strain, the

forced effort, the uncongeniality of a motivation that was primarily financial.

It was for financial reasons again that Dunne once more revived the Dooley series in the mid-twenties. Mr. Dooley seemed uncomfortably out of place in the era of bootleggers, hip-flasks and saxophones. Perhaps it was symbolic of his status to find him now running a speakeasy. Dunne wrote these essays on contract, painfully and reluctantly, yet even with the tide against him he could not wholly deny his genius.

"Th' saloon destroyed th' home," said Mr. Dooley, "but th' home has turned like a rattlesnake an' destroyed th' saloon—th' home an' home brew. . . ."

"There ain't as much dhrunkenness as there was. I know that," said Mr. Hennessy.

"No," said Mr. Dooley, "but what there is is a much more finished product."

It was not unworthy of the past.

When in 1927 Dunne received a large legacy from his friend Payne Whitney he threw over his contract and abandoned Mr. Dooley for good. In the next decade he wrote a few non-dialect fragments—a skeletal memoir, a defense of the indefensible Harding whom he had known socially, a few unsuccessful pieces in the form of a letter to his son in which he made a laboured effort to show his modernity. Nothing more of significance was to come from his pen. His personal life continued to revolve around his clubs, increasingly he found an anodyne in alcohol. From all accounts he was a witty and amusing companion to the end. He had merely outlived his creation.

Yet in the more permanent world of art his creation has outlived him. In Mr. Dooley Dunne brought into existence a unique character, a fictive personality that would last far beyond his own life-time and the lives of his contemporaries. Martin Dooley behind the bar of the little gas-lit room heavy with the scent of liquor, nutmeg, lemon peel and what he called "proletariats" is the written word formed into a human being. There are not many such characters in our western literature.

Dunne was able to express his fundamental self only through the personality of Mr. Dooley. Like Don Quixote, the character that began as a figure of fun ended by overshadowing the author. Dunne himself was superficial, an Epicurean. Dooley is a stoic for whom life is a mystery, the universe a riddle, human progress a mirage. He did not share his countrymen's facile optimism. It was no comic figure who could write: "I've been up to th' top iv th' very highest buildin' in town, Hinnissy, an' I wasn't anny nearer Hivin' thin if I was in th' shreet. Th' stars was as far away as iver. An' down beneath is a lot iv us runnin' an' lapin' an' jumpin' about, pushin' each other over, haulin' little shtrips iv ir'n to pile up in little buildin's that ar-re called skyscrapers but not be th' sky; wurrukin' night an' day to make a masheen that'll carry us fr'm wan jack-rabbit colony to another an' yellin', 'Pro-gress!' Pro-gress, oho! I can see th' stars winkin' at each other an' sayin':

'Ain't they funny! Don't they think they're playin' hell!"

For Mr. Dooley one can expect neither honesty, perfectibility nor happiness in this "gob iv arth that we live on f'r a few hours, spinnin' round f'r no sinsible raison in th' same foolish, lobsided circle, an' comin' back to th' same place ivry year, without thought or care iv th' poor crathers hangin' onto it. . . . A betther race would be wasted on it. We may be bad, but we're plenty good enough f'r what we get fr'm th' wurruld."

At the most one can keep a little loving-kindness and preserve one's own integrity in the face of the common dilemma. It is before that dilemma and that mystery that men are truly equal. "I, mesilf," Mr. Dooley maintains, "am ivry man. Barrin' iddycation an' th' business we're in, th' King iv England an' Martin Dooley is all out iv th' same peck measure. If I know mesilf, I know thim all. King, Czar . . . they're all me with betther or worse clothes All men are ME. Th' little tape line that I use f'r mesilf is long enough an' acc'rate enough to measure anny man in th' wurruld, an' if it happens that I'm ladlin' out red impeeryalism at tin cints th' glass instead of breakin' stones at Joliet or frinds in Wall Sthreet it's because I started th' way I did."

We are indeed each of us every man. And yet who is this everyman, this self? Mr. Dooley finds him essentially unknowable. "How can I know anything," he asks, "whin I haven't puzzled out what I am mesilf?" In a dark vision he sees this awareness only in one's dying. Then in these final fleeting moments may come the self-knowledge that has been denied a man all his previous years.

F'r the first time in ye'er life ye're alone. F'r the first time in ye'er life ye ar-re y'ersilf. Hiven knows how manny years ye've been somebody else. Ye've been ye'er wife, ye'er fam'ly, ye'er relations, th' polisman on th' beat, th' doctor, th' newspaper reporther, th' foreman at th' mills, th' laws iv th' land, th' bartinder that gives ye dhrinks, th' tailor, th' barber, an' public opinyon. Th' wurruld has held a lookin'-glass in front iv ye fr'm th' day ye were born an' compelled ye to make faces in it. But in this here particular business ye have no wan to please but y'ersilf. Good opinyon an' bad opinyon ar-re alike. Ye're akelly unthroubled be gratichood an' revenge. No wan can help ye or stay ye. . . ."

So it is. Under the bright verbiage, the racial wit, the at times imish humour of the Dooley essays runs this sombre and unalterable counter-current that is the classic tragedy of human existence.

RE-READING 'THE CROCK OF GOLD'

I

MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AGO, WHEN NEITHER JAMES STEPHENS nor his immediate cultural matrix, the Irish Literary Renaissance, could have been viewed in as clear a historical perspective as today, one critic nevertheless managed to recognise Stephens's modernity. "He is modern," wrote Eugene Mason eight years after the appearance of *The Crock of Gold*, "in his insistence on individuality . . . , in his refusal to accept anything on hearsay . . . in his shrinking from dogma, and in the light-hearted manner in which he will cheerfully advance the most debatable propositions"¹

Indeed, the author's distrust of philosophical rationalism, of pure thought divorced from life, amounts to a major theme in *The Crock of Gold*. In a sense one may interpret this novel as the intellectual man's search for and successful winning of the spirit of life. Our Philosopher who is to learn something beyond pure wisdom—something that will not only prolong his life beyond his brother's but eventually save him—is presented in the very first sentence. Somewhat disguised, to be sure. "In the centre of the pine wood called Coilla Dorace there lived not long ago two Philosophers." This disguise through mathematics, the ever important apparatus of rationalism, continues. The identity of the Philosopher who is to act as the hero of the book is achieved negatively, through the author's unique method of causing the other Philosopher to die of boredom, but a molecule of benevolence, optimism, and curiosity is destined to make all the difference.

The conflict awakened in the Philosopher, the surviving one, upon encountering Caitlin Ni Murrachu in the company of Pan marks the first serious disturbance in his intellectual complacency. "Hussy," is his *a priori* judgment on seeing the naked girl, but that he is glandularly affected becomes evident from his learned monologue on flesh and sinew and the use of clothing. What has stimulated him physically in the sunlight is now in the cave complemented by Pan's hedonistic panegyric. "You leave out brains," breaks out the Philosopher at last. "I believe in mind above matter. Thought above emotion. Spirit above flesh." And leaving, he calls Caitlin "hussy" once again, but on the rugged path he can hear the pipes of Pan, "calling and sobbing and making high merriment on the air."

¹Mason, "The Personality of Mr. James Stephens," *The Living Age*, May 29, 1920, 540-43.

If we were to sum up the effect of Pan and the awakened Caitlin on the Philosopher the word "human" would be most appropriate. It is significant that as he journeys forth the Philosopher becomes enraptured by the beauty of the physical world. "That sunshine!" he cries out. "Oh, the glory of it, the goodness and bravery of it . . . Thought! Oh! The petty thing! but motion! emotion! these were the realities."

During his three subsequent contacts with human beings the Philosopher no longer seeks the security of irrelevant abstractions. To the flirtation of the fat woman not only does he respond by kissing her, but her practical wisdom in matters of love arouses a heretofore unprecedented interest in him. The old woman he meets next, the poor abused old widow, awakens his sympathies, and although he does nothing to help her he allows her plight to affect him enough to feel relieved once she disappears from his sight. His third experience throws a more important light on our hero's newly evolved personality than would appear. The woman who has been incapable of making up her mind as to which one of her two companions to marry perceives laudable qualities in the Philosopher:

"I'll tell you why I didn't marry either of you. You are only a pair of tinkers going from one place to another, and not knowing anything at all of fine things; but himself was walking along the road looking for strange, high adventures, and it's a man like that a woman would be wishing to marry if he was twice as old as he is."

She perceives qualities in him of the traditional Irish tramp, the imaginative and carefree spirit, whose character Synge has, for example, celebrated in *The Shadow of the Glen*. It is indeed no longer an abstractionist but a human being that arrives before Angus Og, the god of love, and bows down before him.

Blessing by the god of love equips our hero for poetry and charity. Once again, as after his dialogue with Pan, he celebrates nature, but now creatively.

From the wells of forgetfulness he regained the shining words and gay melodies which his childhood had delighted in, but these he sang loudly and unceasingly as he marched.

Then, in a touching scene he shares his last scraps of cake with a family, saying, "All men are brothers, and it may be that these people are as hungry as I am." We shall appreciate the Philosopher's rapid spiritual evolution by recalling that previous to his encounter with Angus Og he had not been able to bring himself to offering any cake to the old widow.

His charity, however, manifests itself in matters of the heart. When the lovesick girl approaches him he invites her to discuss her difficulties with him. "If you are in trouble tell it

to me," he says; then adds with humility, without daring to suggest that he might be of help, "and perhaps you will talk the heaviest part away." In effect he helps her, as well as the boy she loves, to find happiness in love, and he is rewarded through a child who unexpectedly turns up with food. Consider this episode of the lovers in the light of our hero's outburst to Pan, "Spirit above flesh!" The asceticism expounded yesterday is wholly shattered now. Flesh and spirit achieve a happy union, and the question of choice becomes a question of proper synthesis.

Plainly the Philosopher is a "changed man" on re-entering his house. "I cannot say how joyful I am to see your good face again," he says to his wife, then embraces the children, apparently for the first time.

This embrace seems in terms of the novel to imply more than awakened paternity. The Philosopher has at last become childlike, for in the author's eyes it is invariably the child who instinctively possesses the genius for the good life. If Seumas and Brigid are yet untutored in the ways of worldly wisdom they possess their blessed innocence which throughout the novel works miracles for them. In an unforgettable scene they discover the sun and, without anyone's having taught them, partake in the delights of nature by playing with their rabbits and squirrels and goats. It is their innocence that enables them to communicate with Pan without hysterics, that makes the Leprecauns, who have actually kidnapped them, treat them with royal hospitality; above all, it is their innocence that guides them to accomplish the happy climax of returning to the Leprecauns their crock of gold. "With children thought cannot be separated from action very long," says the author in describing this incident. "They think as much with their hands as with their heads. They have to do the thing they speak of in order to visualise the idea." It is significant that, similarly, at the highest stage of Caitlin Ni Murrachu's spirituality "each thought was a thing or a person, visible in its own radiant personal life."

II

James Stephens's impatience with existing institutions has in this novel given rise to direct criticism in the form of social protest and indirect criticism in the form of quiet departure from orthodox theology. Undoubtedly the most powerful example of social revolt is constituted by the two autobiographical stories that the Philosopher hears in the darkness of his cell. While they have little to do with the plot formally, they possess power and beauty of their own, and one might consider them the microcosm of the entire latter part of the book. Both stories illustrate how deplorable social and economic conditions will reduce honest men to thievery, but they are by no means mere sermons, as Robert Shafer, a sympathetic but sentimental critic of Stephens, suggests.²

²Shafer, "James Stephens and the Poetry of the Day," *Forum*, October, 1913. Pg. 560-9.

Stephens is more guilty of sermonizing elsewhere. Chapter XIII begins, for example, with a little essay which sums up the author's philosophical position then turns into a critique of modern justice. This admittedly mars the narrative, although it may be pointed out in its favour that it does form a logical starting point of the second major theme, human versus natural justice, into which the first theme, abstract versus practical wisdom, resolves. These two themes, in fact, now blended into harmony, now contrapuntally, carry the novel to its conclusion.

It is interesting to examine the policemen in this connection. On the one hand they represent human justice, on the other hand they are men. "The seizure of a criminal may be justified by certain arguments as to the health of society and the preservation of property, but no person wishes under any circumstances to hale a wise man to prison." For this reason the policemen have not been created as sinister as temptation might have warranted. The Philosopher, too, appreciates that his captors are primarily obeying the rules of their profession, and while he does not march with them cheerfully he resists passively by mere protest—in the style of his former, abstract, personality.

Clearly, Stephens is far from advocating anarchy. When the Philosopher is freed by the Leprecauns, although his wife assures him that the Leprecauns, even Angus Og, would surely give him refuge from human law, he chooses to give himself up. "This is what I think," he argues, "that a man should always obey the law with his body and always disobey it with his mind."

If anarchy is at all implied in this it is intellectual anarchy, and that invariably stretches into the realm of religious orthodoxy. From what I have said so far it is clear that the author's moral scheme is essentially Christian. In addition to the emphasis on love, charity, and humility, the Philosopher's arrest at a time when he has fully achieved these virtues may be looked on as an expression of the tradition of martyrdom. Nevertheless, a purely Christian interpretation of the moral scheme will not do. In Chapter II, just as the Philosopher's brother is about to die of boredom, there occurs a dialogue between the two Philosophers which not only has importance in terms of the novel but brings up what seems to me its most provocative problem about life. One of the Philosophers claims that he has learned everything worth knowing, that nothing interests him any longer. The other, in a moment of that rare insight which is to save him in the end, argues:

"You do not yet know how to play the tambourine, nor how to be nice to your wife, nor how to get up first in the morning and cook the breakfast. . . . Theory is but the preparation for practice. It has occurred to me, brother, that wisdom may not be the end of everything. Goodness and kindness are, perhaps, beyond wisdom."

This is a decidedly Christian idea, but his next sentence, "Is it

not possible that the ultimate end is gaiety and music and a dance of joy?" smacks of paganism, and one cannot help recalling *cinq-ue-cento* angels frolicking with unconscious sensuality.

The blending of the Christian and pagan elements, however, receives a more poignant expression through the presence in the novel of Pan. It is needless to emphasise that according to Christian theology lust is an improper way of love, and that it has no place in the soul's progress from a state of indifference and intellectual pride to a state of spiritual bliss. Here, however, as I pointed out before, the Philosopher becomes a human being through an awakening of his senses as well as through his conversation with the god of lust, Pan. In fact, one may say without exaggeration that lust in this novel becomes the first step toward salvation. The Philosopher's experience is not unique. Caitlin Ni Murrachu, who is to attain the highest spiritual position by becoming the wife of Angus Og, the god of love, fulfills her apprenticeship in domestic matters during a period when she is the mistress of Pan.

III

The presence in this novel of Pan is furthermore an answer to the renaissance poet's inevitable interest in classical antiquity. This importation, however, of the Greek god of flocks and shepherds and his transformation into the god of lust imply a coming to terms with the demands of national tradition. Stephens's mythology is predominantly Irish, even if the pagan Pan and the Christian God and Holy Ghost become part of it. Although any specific attempt at creating order among this characteristically Celtic hodgepodge of deities is bound to result in theological absurdity, for purposes of analysis it seems possible to make a division between the world of the Leprecauns and the world of the gods. The Leprecauns are mischievous little men, but their charm prevents us from looking upon them as evil. They live in the earth—an abode that symbolizes evil in more than one religion; but if they are capable of kidnapping Seumas and Brigid, bringing false charges against the Philosopher, and leading Caitlin into the arms of Pan, they are also capable of entertaining the children, freeing the Philosopher, and contributing to Caitlin's psychological growth. Although the Leprecauns have for centuries fulfilled the need of myth to manifest itself in a manner contrary to the benignity of the gods, the Celtic love of life—and are we not reminded in this of the ancient Greeks?—has never allowed them to become full-fledged devils. Stephens in this respect looks back to the Celtic past, and his Leprecauns at the very height of mischief prove irresistible.

The relationship between the world of Leprecauns and the world of gods is never made explicit; but, since the main action of the novel originates in a misunderstanding between the Leprecauns and the human world and since humans in their plight turn to the gods for succour, one is reminded of the relation-

ship between the Fates and the gods in Greek mythology. At any rate, the gods incline toward benevolence, with Angus Og designated as the chief deity, the god of love. He is anthropomorphic in the Greek fashion, capable of marrying the mortal maiden, Caitlin, and having a son by her. Frequently, in direct philosophical exposition, the functions of Angus Og become confused with those of the Christian God. The difficulty increases when we learn of the existence of an immortal trinity consisting of God, Man, and Nature, and when the Holy Ghost is referred to as the great artist. Abstract ideas, such as happiness, love, and beauty, are often personified by capitalization. The Thin Woman on her journey meets three absolutes: the most beautiful man, the strongest man, and the ugliest man, representing respectively Thought, Love, and Generation. Finally, partaking in the "Happy March,"

There came Bove Derg, the Fiery, seldom seen,
and his harper the son of Trogain, whose music heals
the sick and makes the sad heart merry; Eochy Mac
Elathan, Dagda Mor, the Father of Stars, and his
daughter from the Cave of Cruachan; Credh Mac Aedh
of Raghery and Cas Corach son of the great Ollav;
Mananaan Mac Lir came from his wide waters shouting
louder than the wind, with his daughters Cliona and
Aoife and Etain Fair-Hair; and Coll and Cecht and
Mac Greina, the Plough, the Hazel, and the Sun came
with their wives, whose names are not forgotten,
even Banba and Fodla and Eire, names of glory.

More came, but at this point we must forget analysis and give ourselves over to wonder, or smiles, or a mixture of the two.

If the spirit of Ireland is expressed through native myth, the Thin Woman of Inis Magrath through her magic powers and her membership in the powerful Shée of Croghan Conghaile, is a human manifestation of this spirit. It has to be admitted that in developing her character the author has become primarily interested—whether sympathetically or satirically—in showing us a woman, rather than an *Irish* woman; just as in the character of the Philosopher, he shows us a philosopher, then a man, but never an Irishman. When the children are born the two Philosophers are pleased, but this has less to do with paternity than with the fact that babies imply existence, and that which is, is good. The women, on the other hand, exhibit strong emotions. Each despises her own child but loves the other's, so that the two are compelled to swap babies. In accordance with feminine logic they utter maledictions and pinch their husbands in bed, even though they love them so much that the Gray Woman follows hers into the grave, while the Thin Woman not only remains alive for the sake of her husband but manages to rouse Angus Og and the great fairy world of Ireland in order to save him.

In the light of her intimacy with this fairy world some readers

might be inspired to look upon the Thin Woman as symbolizing the genius the Irish have for dealing with practical matters intuitively, in contradistinction to the genius the surrounding world has for dealing with abstractions in a matter-of-fact way. Let this remain a possibility for interpretation. What concerns us here is that the Thin Woman in the totality of her setting suggests that the author was at least aware of the concept of Irish identity.

IV

Even if we were ignorant of Stephens's method of writing *The Crock of Gold* (George Moore says in *Hail and Farewell* that the novel is an outgrowth of independent "scribblings" during the author's employment in a law office), it would be obvious that the book was not written on the basis of a carefully conceived outline. Order in this work seems to lack so strikingly that some readers prefer to consider it a vaguely connected set of experiences rather than a novel. To be sure, in stories stretching over two hundred pages we have come to take form so much for granted that it is not design but the lack of it that tends to distinguish *The Crock of Gold* from other novels. Whereas its spontaneity and looseness of form will appeal to the lyric mind, which is impatient with sustained design, it will disturb the architectural mind, which is in turn impatient with uncalled-for flights of fancy.

Design and spontaneity tend to become reconciled as soon as we consider the work as characteristic of the renaissance tradition; but, since the artist is by definition concerned with form, we may legitimately inquire into the artist's reasons for deviation. What force makes a writer succumb to his momentary flights of fancy to an extent where he cannot resist their inclusion in an otherwise organized work? Or, bearing in mind what we know about the birth of this book, what weakens a writer's resistance when faced with the problem of whether or not to include in his projected design fragments that are irrelevant to it, that are valuable in terms only of themselves? Without attempting to go too far into the mysteries of the creative process, I think we may suggest a partial answer by considering Stephens's interest in philosophy, humour, and poetry.

Philosophical passages during which the action lies still occur in this novel in two ways: from the lips of the Philosophers and from the lips of the author himself. The difference between the two is a result of the author's intention either to satirize or to instruct; and, since the author is a more brilliant satirist than philosopher and since satire belongs to a novel while philosophical discourse does not, the difference for the reader is that between delight and impatience.

Obviously, the author enjoys philosophizing, but he is intelligent enough to know that this enjoyment is an excellent subject for satire; moreover he is enough of an artist to be able to satirize this tendency in himself. If we examine these philosophical bits of dialogue that are expounded by the Philosophers, I do not

think we shall ever find them nonsensical. In themselves they are sensible and useful; the hilarity comes from their total irrelevance to the practical issue at hand. Similarly, alas!, when the author pours the remaining philosophy in his system into the reader's ear in order to illumine some aspect of the narrative, the result is often irrelevance. If we do not quite laugh—this time at the author—it shows that we are well-mannered readers and that the author's sin is not unpardonable.

We pardon him primarily, I think, on account of his genius for humour. Whether it manifests itself in the form of exaggeration or oversimplification or juxtaposition, or in a special brand of delicate charm through which his children and Leprecauns and rabbits and squirrels become unforgettable, we willingly follow him into realms that become wholly disconnected from the main intention of the story. The conversation, for example, between the cow and the fly has no conceivable relationship even to the incident of which it is part. The cow speaks:

"Move up a little bit please, I want to lick my nose: it's queer how itchy my nose gets"—the fly moved up a bit. "If," the cow continued, "you had stayed there, and if my tongue had hit you, I don't suppose you would ever have recovered."

"Your tongue couldn't have hit me," said the fly. "I move quickly you know."

Hereupon the cow silyly whacked her tongue across her nose. She did not see the fly move, but it was hovering safely half an inch over her nose.

"You see," said the fly.

"I do," replied the cow, and she bellowed so sudden and furious a snort of laughter that the fly was blown far away by that gust and never came back again.

If we allow our imagination to linger in a scene such as this we shall realize how successfully the very force that compelled the artist to succumb to a momentary flight of fancy is now communicated to the reader, with a similar result of irresistibility.

The marriage between philosophy and poetry is seldom happy. Each has a kind of truth of its own; and, whereas it is possible to philosophize in terms of concrete images, which are the stuff of poetry, the greatest minds interested in both have managed to subordinate one to the other. Nietzsche was a good philosopher who had the added virtue of being able to express himself so beautifully that we think of him as a poet. The vast systems of thought constructed by Goethe and Dante happily remain cosmic, without interfering with their poetry on the human level. Shelley, the supreme lyricist, often got into difficulty when his abstract ideas invaded his poetic imagination; Coleridge was great in his poetry when he left metaphysics alone.

If James Stephens's philosophizing tends to become obscure or self-contradictory, this is usually due to his poetic imagination. Most of us have had the experience of listening to young men who begin by expressing some abstract notion which sooner or later is carried forward wholly on the strength of images that have invaded their minds, until what they say is true only in terms of the beauty of these images, jarring disturbingly with the kind of truth they started with. This seems often to be the difficulty in *The Crock of Gold*. Whether we think of the great catalogue of Irish deities, or the essay on justice, or the Thin Woman's lecture to the children, there is this intellectual jar. What saves the situation is that sooner or later the author's keen poetic powers make us forget the ideas he started with.

This examination of *The Crock of Gold* will not, I hope, be taken as a justification for personal admiration. The nature of this novel—perhaps for its unconventionality—makes it impossible to demonstrate either its excellence or its worthlessness. That some of us find delight in it while others do not, makes me, in fact, doubt its greatness. It is always possible to become “educated” to great works, to acquire the cultural and critical equipment necessary for their enjoyment and appreciation. Those, however, to whom *The Crock of Gold* does not appeal are not likely to be intellectually deficient, and therefore no amount of “enlightenment” will prepare them for it. It is with a certain regret that I conclude that in the final analysis appreciation for this novel is a matter of taste; and in order to compensate for this I shall permit myself to be subjective in asserting my enchantment with it.

Ready April

CASEMENT'S LAST ADVENTURE

BY CAPT. ROBERT MONTEITH

WITH A FOREWORD BY FRANZ VON PAPEN

“The only person alive, if he is alive, who knows the whole of my coming and why I came, with what aim and hope is Monteith. I hope he is alive and that you may see him, and he will tell you that the very thing I am blamed for and am dying for, was just what you would have wished me to do”.—

*Extract from a letter, Sir Roger Casement to his sister, dated
Pentonville Prison, 25th July, 1916.*

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WALTER STARKIE

A SCOTS NOTE TO 'RAGGLE TAGGLE'

EVEN TODAY IT IS NOT UNKNOWN TO HEAR SCOTTISH GYPSIES ASSERT that their ancestors came by way of Ireland into Scotland and there is actually a document in Scotland, a letter of King James IV, 1506, to the King of Denmark in favour of Antonio Gawino—Earl of Little Egypt and Chief of the Gypsies. But Gypsies were known in Scotland long before that, even as far back as James II in 1460, but they were generally called Saracens. It is strange that when we hear of the great Band of Gypsies who invaded Europe at the beginning of the fifteenth century, we do not find any records of their stay in Ireland for the Indian Romanies have nothing to do with the tinkers, the descendants of the Irish metal workers. What probably happened was that after publication of the edict of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1499 against the Gypsies, a certain number of the Spanish Gypsies passed over to the next country in the South West, namely Ireland which had so many connections with Spain, and found their way to Scotland before 1506.

The next document there is to be found in Scotland on Gypsy history was in the reign of James V and is dated 1540. By this document the King of the Scots entered into a legal treaty with John Faw, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt. Now James V was a very Bohemian king. He used to disguise himself as the Gaberlunzie-man, or Guid-man of Ballangiegh, and go vagabonding with the Romanichals. Once he fell in with a band of Gypsies in the midst of their carouses in a cave near Wemyss in Fifeshire. His Majesty joined in the revels and it was not long before a scuffle ensued and the king was roughly handled. The Romanichals humiliated him and compelled His Majesty to act as a servant and carry the Gypsy wallets on his back. The King had his revenge soon and caused an Order of Council to be issued immediately, declaring that if three Gypsies were found together, two were to be instantly seized and hanged or shot, by any of His Majesty's subjects who chose to put the Order into execution.

Many of these fascinating anecdotes of Gypsy history come from the pen of the greatest Scottish Romany Rye, Walter Simpson, whose "History of the Gypsies in Scotland" (1865) is a classical work on the subject.

The history of the Gypsies is in glaring contrast to their vicissitudes in the South of Europe, for instead of being persecuted they were treated on terms of equality by the Scottish people, and intermarried with them. More surprising still is Simpson's declaration that their thieving proclivities, which had shocked all Spaniards, even the tolerant Cervantes, was no bar to their inter-

marriage with the population, as the Scottish people were accustomed to thieving of all kinds. Simpson makes a detailed study of the whole problem of Gypsy stealing reminding his readers that in India robbers were looked upon as reputable persons and their profession was hereditary and recognized by old Hindoo law in the Gentoo Code, and they all came under the protection of the goddess Kali, who was revered in Bengal. These robbers belonged to an aboriginal tribe in Hindostan called the Kookies, who looked upon skill in stealing as the most important quality after personal valour. In fact so highly considered was this skill that the greatest self-recommendation a Kookie could give to his prospective bride was that his home was full of stolen articles. With these Indian precedents can we wonder that the Scottish Gypsies like their brothers in Spain and other countries, trained their children in theft and tested their powers on the Scots, but found that the latter were more than able to hold their own, for, as Simpson reminds us, according to the Scottish traditional clan spirit, it was not only lawful but even patriotic to rob your enemy in the neighbouring clan. In Scotland there was for a long time little prejudice attached to the name of Gypsy. On the contrary, for the merchant family of Falls of Dunbar, descendants of the Gypsy Faas at Yetholm, took great pride in their Gypsy ancestor Johnnie Faw, the friend of King James V, and one of them—Mrs. Falls—had the history of her people in the act of leaving the Gypsy settlement in Yetholm, embroidered in tapestry. Everyone, too, sang the traditional border ballad "The Gypsy Laddie" which describes how Johnnie Faw, the Gypsy chieftain, carried off Lady Jean Hamilton, Countess of Cassilis, in the first half of the 17th century. The moral of that ballad is in the last stanza :

"And we were fifteen well made men,
Altho' we were nae bonny ;
And we were a' put down for ane,
A fair young wanton lady."

The Scottish Gypsies were evidently a dangerous temptation to the fair sex in the 17th century, and they must have been regarded as a lawless set of ruffians by the authorities, when fifteen were hanged for the Countess who, it appears, eloped of her own free will. From another source in the early 19th century, Dr. Chambers, we derive a less favourable picture of the Scottish Romanichals, for he says that they lost their national character of Egyptians and became a mingled race having all the idleness and predatory instincts of their Eastern ancestors and the ferocity which they learnt from the men of the North. In another passage he says that the tribes lived like wild Indians among European settlers. Meg Merrilies we all know from Sir Walter Scott's "Guy Mannering" (one of his three best novels according to his biographer Buchan) emerges as the first Gypsy character in fiction : "half crazy, wild as a hawk, savage, yet with nobility in her

savagery." Dr. Chambers gives some very interesting details about the actual Gypsy from whom Scott took Meg Merrilies. Her name was Jean Gordon and she was born in the Gypsy settlement at Kirk Yetholm in 1670. In 1714 she was indicted with eleven others at Jedburgh for fire-raising, but the blame fell upon the chief culprit, another Gypsy woman, Janet Stewart, who was sentenced to be scourged through the streets and to stand for a quarter of an hour with one of her ears nailed to a post near the cross in the town. In the same year one of Jean Gordon's sons, Alexander Faa, was murdered by Robert Johnston. The murderer escaped justice for ten years, but was eventually indicted by His Majesty's advocate and was sentenced to be hanged in 1727 but managed to escape from the prison. It was, however, more difficult to escape Gypsy justice. Jean Gordon traced him, and followed him to Holland and thence to Ireland, where she had him seized and brought back to Jedburgh. Eventually she witnessed his corpse hanging from the gibbet on Gallow-Hill. Soon afterwards when she was at Stanhope, a sheep farm on Bennet Water, a good-man said to her: "Well, Jean, ye hae got Reb Johnston hanged at last and out o' the way."

"Aye gude man," replied Jean lifting up her apron by the two corners—"an a' that fo' o' gowd has na done it." Dr. Chambers adds that Jean Gordon made it a point of honour not to rob her friends, but her sons were not so particular, and so when a guest stayed the night in her camp she would keep his gold safe for him, to prevent her sons stealing it. They soon met their doom and were condemned to be hanged on the same day. As it turned out, the jury were equally divided, but one who had slept during the discussion woke up and shouted: "Hang them a'," to which Jean replied: "The Lord help the innocent a day like this." She was a great Jacobite and ready to fight for her opinions. In 1746 after Culloden she was ducked in the river but when she came to the surface she gasped out: "Charlie yet, Charlie yet!"¹

From the description we have given of Jean Gordon it can be seen that the Scottish Gypsies were dangerous customers, who in characteristic Gypsy fashion adapted their tribal organization to the clan life in Scotland. It is all the more surprising, therefore, to find that these bandits, according to Simpson, were actually appointed Preservers of Peace or roving justices in Scotland in 1775. They rode on horseback armed with sword and pistol, attended by four men on foot carrying staves and batons. There was evidently in Scotland a regularly constructed Gypsy polity, for the chiefs gave special tokens as safe-conducts to the members of their tribes and the Romanichals had their own laws in operation. It is strange to think that at the very time when

¹ W. Chambers. *Exploits, Anecdotes of the Most Remarkable Gypsies in the Southern countries of Scotland. Together with Traits of Their Origin, Character and Manners.* Edinburgh, 1821.

the Scottish Romanichals possessed their own laws and, in addition, were actually passing judgment on the gorgios, the Gypsies in Austria, Spain and other countries were prohibited from even using the word Gypsy.

We must, however, add that the American War of Independence brought to an end the Gypsy golden age in Scotland, for owing to the English government's imperative need for more recruits, the Tinker-Gypsies were seized and pressed into the fleets and armies serving in America. As a result of the press-gangs, the Gypsies of Scotland were dispersed and never again recovered the exalted position they once enjoyed. Also many of the Gypsies true to their traditions as Romanichals joined the army in order to obtain the King's bounty, and their passage across the ocean, for was it not better to travel this way than to be "*bitchady pawdel*" or transported, and find oneself in a "*staripen*" on the other side? When they did arrive in America they again showed themselves true Gypsies by deserting and marrying Gypsy women over there. And as Gypsies never settle down singly, but gather their tribe around them when they have found a profitable camping-place, soon their tribes in Scotland migrated "*en masse*" to America and followed the example of Charlotte Stanley, the Queen of the English Gypsies, in handing down a newer and nobler tradition in the land of "the kettle and the tented waggon."

Joseph

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THESE ARE A few of the distinguished books which have appeared in whole or in part in *The Kenyon Review* in recent years. And among our regular contributors whose short critical writings have received wide attention are:

R. P. Blackmur, Lionel Trilling, Allen Tate,

Kenneth Burke, William Empson, Eric Bentley.

THE WINTER 1953 number, which is now available, continues our policy of presenting the best in contemporary literature and criticism. Featured is the new long poem by Robert Penn Warren, *BROTHER TO DRAGONS*, an epic of the slaveholding South. The Winter number contains 100 pages of the poem (the first half, complete), and in addition presents the opening chapter of a satirical novel by Randall Jarrell called *PICTURES FROM AN INSTITUTION*—Mr. Jarrell's first venture into fiction. During 1953 we will publish further sections from it. Essays and reviews this time include F. W. Dupee's remarks on the new novel by Hemingway, Robert Daniel's consideration of "Odes to Dejection," and E. A. Burt's discussion of the philosophy of Radhakrishnan.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE CARDS OF THE GAMBLER, by Benedict Kiely.

Methuen & Co. Ltd. 14/-.

HONEY SEEMS BITTER,

by Benedict Kiely.

E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc. \$3.

The cards of the gambler, they say, are scattered on a rock near the gate of Heaven, dropped there at the sound of Peter's voice. Wide wandering and many adventures done, his strange bargain with God and death worked out to its conclusion, the gambler has won the jackpot at last.

In Benedict Kiely's expert hands, the old folk-tale assumes curious and sometimes frightening shapes. I rationed myself to a few pages a day, finished the book in a slow Sunday train, looked up from the last page and across a wide weedy field to a table-topped mountain. Rain-clouds drifting and a seagull pinned slantwise on the wind like a picture on a wall. Three spires straining upwards from clumps of trees, and under them the green mounds where the dead sleep softly. Across the field a man walked slowly and a dog frisked at his heels. God and the world and life and death, all together. The landscape was the book and the book was the landscape.

You won't find here the folk-tale's romantic trimmings, the alluring details that keep the humdrum workaday you from involvement in terror. The characters are as matter-of-fact as your neighbours. The card-playing doctor who ruins his practice. The golden-haired priest

who baptises the doctor's child, and claims he is God. The child's sponsor, who says his name is Death—a shifty contact-man, his black brief-case bulging with ghoulis yellowing newspaper cuttings, a shadowy figure who can assume like an overcoat the form of a ginger-haired soldier with a hangover, or a Spanish revolutionary hiding a broken body in the folds of a duffle-coat. Any of these might well be the man next door. In the midst of life we are in death, and eternity hides round the familiar corner. Nothing is certain any more, except the four last things.

The book is full of what Joyce called "Epiphanies," the thing casually seen and barely noted, which suddenly lets in the light of heaven through a rent in the fabric of reality. "A woman dressed in a light summer frock, carrying balanced on her left shoulder a white plank, walked, not heeding the rain, along the flooded pavement." There it is, the moment of truth, when the concrete becomes the symbolic.

There are faults and weaknesses here and there, but they are those inevitable to a work of such immense scope. And whatever the minor flaws of the middle stretches, the long slow sequence which follows the breaking of the gambler's bargain, when the sands begin inexorably to run out, contains some of the finest writing of my omniverous experience. This is by a long way the most important Irish novel of recent years, large in design, ingenious in execution, and humane in outlook. It is a book to buy, to read, to re-read, to ponder and remember.

No man, however, can be writing great books all the time. *Honey*

Seems Bitter is by no means Important Literature, but it is first-class entertainment. It is the story of a murder, and the people caught up in the backwash of violence; Donagh Hartigan, the misfit who at a necking party "quoted something from Pascal and felt himself wither in the chill uncomprehending silence"; George Butler, the big successful man, Galahad or Lucifer; and Emily Rayel, the small blonde girl with the fourteenth-century face. These three, around them other minor characters, and behind them the shadow of a strangled girl and a man condemned.

The book is determinedly literary, even the title being a quotation from Marcus Aurelius. It is written in the easy, haunting prose of Kiely's earlier work (read his essay on O'Rathaille in the 1942 *Capuchin Annual*) but with added depth. He is writing well within his powers, but the effort of *The Cards of The Gambler*, like the training of a weight-lifter, has extended these powers enormously. Many details are common to both books, but here they are background to a narrative and not symbols of eternity.

The publication within a couple of months of one another of these two novels, so completely dissimilar, gives some indication of what may yet be expected of Mr. Kiely's remarkable talents. From a man with more than half his working life still before him and with this much already to his credit, there are no limits to our hopes.

Maurice Kennedy

CEO MEALA LÁ SEACA by
Micheál Mac Liammóir.

Sairséal agus Dill. 7/6.

NÚASCÉALAÍOCHT ed. by
Tomás de Bhaldraithe.

Sairséal agus Dill. 8/6.

Mac Liammóir's *A Honey Mist on a Day of Frost* opens with 'Harlequin's Cloak'—the story of his theatrical career up to 1928, when the Gate Theatre Studio was founded in the Peacock. You feel, as you read along, that spurred on by zeal for his

country and the arts, he enjoyed those years of his life—and narrating the story gaily and lucidly he imparts joy to the reader.

Everything is clear: you see the committee of the newly-founded Gaelic theatre, the Taibhdhearc—Liam O'Briain, Sean Mac Giollarnath, Liam O'Buachalla, Tomás O'Maille, Dr. O'Beirne and himself, amongst others, seated around a big fire on the country hearth, discussing plans.

I hope our Minister to the Netherlands will read his tender and shining description of her appearance upon some gala occasion. Later on, we get a glimpse of Orson Welles, making a film in Paris—astonished that Mac Liammóir should want to go to Killarney, judging plays: "You mean to say you prefer Killarney to myself and Hilton and Paris in the Spring! H'm." But I have not space for saying more about this lively book.

The bright yellow cover, with a strong half-mystical drawing by the author, echoes the gay mood within.

In *Núascéalaíocht*, Liam O'Flaherty in his story "The Touch" gives us a splendid picture of a wild horse ridden along the strand by a wild young girl carrying a can of tea and eatables to her father and his hired boy who are stacking sea-weed on the shore. We see her youth touched by tender romance, which suddenly, sorrowfully, slips into disillusionment. Frank O'Connor's "Darcy in Tir-Na-n-Og" is pitched in a lower key. The people are very real; but when the not unusual escapade ensues, it is given a magical complexion. Perhaps indeed all these—not unusual—escapades we learn of were worked by magical influences, far outside human control, and re-creations were out of place. Certainly there are none in this story: Nora welcomes her man back, and never asks where he has been.

Mairtín O'Cathain's "Enlightenment" has a grand stark classic air about it. Three odd men, variously disfigured, are seated in different postures against a fence upon the sea-shore. They are filled with malice and envy towards any that are working and deriving profit—salvaging wreckage, gathering sea-weed or the like from the sea, at which they just stare, smoking their pipes. Ineffectual, utterly idle, they nurse murderous thoughts. Wry-neck utters

a malicious phrase. Squint-eyed and oddity number three echo it, word for word. They are like the Chorus to the drama of the Tide. Indeed, the story has the atmosphere of Greek tragedy—comical as it is, from one aspect. The end is most happily rounded off.

These are the three high-lights of an entertaining and varied collection of short stories. May we hope now for a third excellent volume: *Níadrámaíocht*.

Blanaid Salkeld

**THE BOLD HEROES OF
HUNGRY HILL, by Seamus
Mac Manus. Dent. 9/6.**

These folk tales are retold to us, in, it seems, the very words in which they were heard by Seamus Mac Manus, when, as a boy, he delighted in joining the fireside groups of Donegal. There, in the homesteads the storyteller was an honoured man. The wording of a story was a highly skilled art, revered by listeners; no word might go astray.

Now, seen here in print, these tales bring vividly to mind's eye a turf-fire gathering; one envisages a typical group . . . the men listening quietly, weighing, judging, appraising the skill of the raconteur scarcely less than the philosophy offered in what, to some, might seem merely a simple story. These men, whose days have gone in field or mountain labour, now bring their long-considered wisdom to bear on the matters unfolded . . . wisdom enriched and deepened by daily contact with the earth. While the women, quick to glean all that there is of wit, show by the sensitive changing faces that no point goes by unnoticed . . . the boys, bright-eyed and eager for adventure, are alive no less to the magic of the pattern, the essential rhythm. We can almost hear them chime in, low-toned and reverent "Once upon a time in the far-away and long ago"—many of the stories are known to them by heart "far longer ago than I could tell you and twice longer ago than you could tell me and ten times longer ago than any one could tell the both of us." Or again it may be when Finn the Fair rode forth "his hound

at his heels, his hawk on his hand, and he on his bright steed mounted."

Twelve tales in all. We owe thanks to the writer. He was not more than seven years old when he first heard them, but they are for adults too—unless the faculty of appreciation has been lost.

Teresa Deevy

EIREABALL SPIDEOIGE,

By Seán O Riordáin.

Sairséal agus Dill.

6/-.

Here is poetry of such fine quality and in such generous measure that in trying to account for the exhilaration of it one is tempted to write of a thousand things other than poetry. O Riordáin's poems are so fully satisfying in themselves that written in any language one could only wonder at them; in Irish as they are, that wonder transfers itself easily—too easily—to non-poetic considerations. Inevitably one thinks of Cromwell and of the thousand other things but as soon as one returns to the poems, Epstein's "I remain silent in my work" comes to mind. The final and only comment on poetry is itself.

One of the reasons that O Riordáin's work is so satisfying is that it is confident. It arises from a mature and integral culture—however that culture may be named—and it has the clarity and hardness of an integrated tradition. At the same time it is sensitive, contemporary and personal. It is crowded with echoes from English and Continental poets but remains unmistakably the work of one gifted, Irish and courageous poet. It smoulders with pity—pathos—but is not sentimental (except in the two or three poems that do not come off), and while at times it has the lovely naïveté of Francis Jammes, or the bravura of Auden, it has too the almost visual impact of Eliot and a quality of mysticism that seeks to absorb (rather commune with) not only the fact of things and their significance but also their very essence.

O Riordáin tells us in his preface that the individual thing moves him more easily to poetry and then the words come easily. Whether they come with ease or with effort his

words, and phrases, are almost always inevitable and unalterable, and in the process he boldly coins words and makes language. Of some of the poems one feels that they would translate readily and literally into

English—or many another language—and remain the same poems. Others are untranslatable. I have not been able to choose between them.

P. J. Madden

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES of the new contributors

Patrick Brady: Born Moynelty, Co. Meath, 1926. Educated in U.C.D., and was editor of *The National Student*. Has had some stories published in *The Bell*. Living in England.

Paul Vincent Carroll: Born Co. Dublin, 1900. He taught in State-schools in Scotland from 1921-37, then resigned and became a full-time playwright. Has gained a world-wide reputation. His best-known play is probably *Shadow and Substance*.

James T. Farrell: Born in Chicago 1904, of Irish descent. Studied at the University of Chicago and later held a succession of jobs. Has devoted himself exclusively to writing for the past twenty years and has an international reputation as a novelist and short-story writer.

James Hanley: Born 1901 of Irish parents, Dublin father, Cork mother. Real name is Hanly but says that the 'e' infiltrated after long Northern England sojourn. After an Elementary School education, in accordance with family tradition went to sea. Has written many stories and novels and is recognised as one of the most forceful of contemporary writers.

George Egon Hatvary: Born Budapest, 1921. Went to the U.S. in 1935 with his parents. Served in American

army 1943-46. Received M.A. from New York University in 1948. Taught English in Boston University and then spent two years in Paris. At present teaching in New York, and writing.

Maurice Irvine: Born Co. Antrim, 1918. Has lived in or near Belfast since 1925 except for five years in Dublin and two in England. Began writing verse again, after period in sanatorium, about 1947.

Fr. Jerome Kiely: Born Kinsale, Co. Cork, 1925. Ordained priest in Maynooth, 1950. Is now a Professor in St. Patrick's College, Carlow.

Ulla O'Malley: Born in Helsingfors, Finland, in 1915, of Irish-Swedish parents. Came to Ireland in 1932. Lives in the Connemara highlands on a thousand-acre farm.

Bernard Share: Born in England, 1930, of Irish parents. Graduated from T.C.D., where he edited *Icarus*. At present working in a Dublin advertising agency.

Walter Stalkie: Born Dublin, 1894. Was Professor of Spanish in University of Dublin. Representative of British Council in Spain. Has written widely-known travel books and a volume on Pirandello.

Poetry Ireland 20

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS

GORDON WHARTON

The Moth

BERNARD SHARE

Traveller

FR. JEROME KIELY

The Voyage

ULLA O'MALLEY

Uaigneas

MAURICE IRVINE

Newgrange

GORDON WHARTON

The Moth

On a summer night, heavy and warm,
a noble moth flew into my room,
stained the ceiling with his shadow,
hovered and swooped at my flickering candle.

A madman with a hole in his jacket
threaded a needle and stabbed his thumb,
poisoned his arm, his body, and he died,
turned up his toes and he died.

In the lunatic's pocket there was a plan,
thumbprint, inkstain, deadly plan,
to split the world into ten thousand pieces,
but the hand that made it swelled and died.

With his mouth chock full with madman's jacket
into my room flew a noble moth.
The crescent moon was like a pot handle
that darkened when it touched my candle.

Hovered and swooped, the moth swooped,
red wing, yellow eye, down from the ceiling
and shrivelled and scorched in my candle's flame;
a hero dazzled by a shiftless light

blinded and shorn. On a summer night,
 charred and black, a moth died,
 his two eyes like holes burned in a blanket.
 Turned up his toes and he died.

BERNARD SHARE

Traveller

"You might have had time for it."—"Yes, but the food was so
 good,
 And the girls, so magnificent. Queer now, I stood
 At the doorway and just didn't bother."
 But then I suppose it was costly, the guides and the tips,
 And the cameras and coloured views. Wide open lips
 Hissing wonder like safety valves. "Funny
 That when I was there it just mattered so little," he said,
 "And I took a good book, or the innkeeper's daughter, to bed."

Yes, you might have had time. But your eyes are the eyes of a
 shepherd
 Whose flock is long lost in the quagmire of year upon year.
 They strayed the first time you were flustered, those five senses
 roaming ;

What, then, if you appear
 Unable to master more history, cities on water,
 Or bronze towers checkmating the plain?
 If only for you, life is sometimes the innkeeper's daughter,
 And the cosy pattern of suburban rain.

"Of course I saw all the important things, you couldn't miss them,
 The signboards were black, red and gold.
 But, well, if you ask me, the Liffey
 Is just as attractive, and as for the old
 Boats, why Guinness has better, and look what they carry! "
 No, you won't marry
 Her, bring her back, make her the heart of you ;
 Venice, its ripeness, its rind.
 And when you made love to her, naked, the moon on the water,
 You pulled down the blind.

FR. JEROME KIELY

The Voyage

Seven years together in a shelfless room
 I thought of God, and waxed my childhuge ears
 against the bookpage-turning tongues of priests,
 and felt no tearing blade of man or grass,
 and then I said, "I can no more amass
 my brain with emptiness, I am of beasts
 Nabuchadnezzar born: the liner clears
 the headland: sailing I will see God in no gloom."

Rubbershod the tender left the quay;
 uncircled not a bubble on the jellyblue;
 a gentle voice was speaking to the bows,
 and as I climbed aboard the Sinaiship
 my soul's light arms hung acheless, and the whip
 of its propellor was mouth-zealous for my house
 driving all world-tinny emptiness from view:
 I thought "Now God will epiphane Him on the sea."

I walked in unclasped sandals on the deck;
 it was the whitewind redsun time of day,
 I saw me wincing 'neath an unseen lash.
 Sudden my hair stemmed into quiet flame
 but God I saw not; rather felt my name
 being written large upon the hairleaf ash
 by Syracusan angels crying "away",
 and yet moist olive leaves fell kissing on my neck.

One angel spoke, his voice as low as thought,
 "Beauty has heaped up mountains in your eyes
 and puckered rings of diamond brightness there;
 still are your eyes no powdered courtier moons
 but writhing vapours out of grey damp doons
 that are struck blind and lose their way in air
 when they lift up to sun. You are called wise:
 Riddle me now and doubt not the parable I have taught."

The sun's maw opened, all an ivory tooth
 and swallowed up the sweet cheese of the sky
 (bewhiles 'twas teaching in the exegesis class):
 I flared upon it, called it glutton light,
 it glued my eyelashes with whitetongues tight
 and all my ignorance, wisely crass,
 departed in the darkness of the eye;
 the parable was opened and the mind's eye saw the truth.

And what is truth? Blinded I could not flee,
my mind not flee the memory of words—
“No man has seen great God at any time.”
An angel once bore a torch of God-staked deeds
and round the garden thick sowed hissing seeds
where now a wall of flame in Michael-mime
blinds all man eyes from seeing of the Lord’s
walking in the evening time around a certain tree.

I turned and walked the shipslength pebbly road,
my eyes no longer blind but curtained new
with dim brocaded tears; then, then I saw
the sun amidships fingermaking lace
of threaded spray, and felt it on my face.
And all the day, I knew, the screw would draw
behind ten pails of cherubs chortling how
a man would kick no more against sunchildren’s goad.

Not sun but work of its fingers I could see,
not God but the musing of His poet’s mind,
not with my eyes but through lenses of the world
transparent scales that God creating sent
out of His eyes like dew; and not lament
would I but glorify the beauty hurled
like coals from God’s hearth hands and search to find
rough flaming words to tell all men His artistry.

When evening, with great hands cupped round us, eeled,
I saw an appled sun adangle doomed
upon a branch of cloud above a basket sea.
’Twas hard to watch the fruit of seven years’ growing
fall to the laps of others, little knowing
their garden plush was a farewell hush for me.
Death-sick I cried, “I sinned to have presumed,”
and straight the sunset ran with oil: I was aneled.

At once my mind was healed—great God I thank—
I knew what meant the towel bank of cloud
about the sun’s fair body; and my gaze
unsymboling, admiring, was upon
the porpoises that tumbled and were gone
across the spikefinned barrier of rays
hitched twixt the sun and us: prayerful I bowed,
and knew no lonely coldness when the warm sun sank.

ULLA O'MALLEY

Uaigneas

It is our essential loneliness
That breaks my heart.
Though I hold nothing back
You only get a part,
When you give all,
My measly measure overflows.
Words fail us to express
The depth, the urge, the stress
Of all we feel.
Only God knows.
Even the sense of touch,
The strongest, the most primitive
And fundamental sense of all
In part alone succeeds
Telling our deepest needs.
In the most close embrace,
Lip touching lip,
Hair intertwined with hair,
Still our essential loneliness is there.

So too the child, grown of our love,
Still curled beneath my heart,
Already has a separate soul,
An independent being,
Though still my body's guest
He heeds not my command.
I cannot guess
The thoughts that fill his breast
Within my womb.
Obedient to his separate will,
He kicks desultorily,
But wounds me not,
Engulfed in private seas
That insulate us both.
Perhaps I irk him, or perhaps
He wants to come closer and still more close.
Only God knows.

So side by side we lie,
Our unborn child between us,
The closest mortal trinity,
Yet each, imprisoned in his soul,
Lonely, lonely for ever.

MAURICE IRVINE

Newgrange

The sun, at midsummer
 Slanting his ray along the level ground
 Finds out the place, the hollow tumulus
 The soft and rounded female principle
 Tomb, womb, the earth's unguarded door
 Moves with precise and geometric strength
 Until the way lies clear to his desire
 And with the signal instant of release
 Splashes his seed against the inmost wall.
 The sanctum where were placed the funeral urns
 The precious vessels containing food for the journey
 And weapons and armour against enemies
 With an exact, elaborate ritual
 In darkness, in smoke of torches, under the spirals
 Flowers for a moment in the living flame.
 The flash expires but the image waits.

The ancestor still sustains his people
 And by his annual fertilising touch
 Provokes earth's bounty, makes fruitful the herds.
 Out of the tomb of the king who was dead
 Who was the life of his people, the keeper of their strength
 Comes the new life; the cycle is complete.
 Though from this moment all is decadence
 And the convulsive pitch of passion spent
 And the tide ebbs, though still the waters seem
 To hold the utmost line of their advance
 Though the days decline from the white zenith
 And the year spirals slowly to decay
 To implacable winter and ineluctable death
 Still is the seed planted: now when all is mirth
 And careless gaiety, the father takes thought for the future.
 After the months within the earth, the womb
 In spring will come new life, the god arise.

MSS. for consideration for the 'Poetry Ireland Supplement' should be addressed to Poetry Ireland, 15 Adelaide Street, Cork, Ireland, and must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.